



3/23/20

Dear Staff and Students,

DHEC is investigating a reported case of COVID-19 identified at Winthrop University. Anyone who had contact with the infected individual may have been exposed to this illness. In group settings, it can be difficult to determine who may have come into contact with an ill person and may become sick. Therefore, information about COVID-19 is provided below. DHEC wants you to be aware of the possible symptoms and take the recommended actions to protect yourself and prevent further spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus. The most common symptoms include **fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.**

- **If you feel ill with any of these symptoms and are concerned that you may have COVID-19:** Stay at home and avoid being around others while you have symptoms. If you are experiencing worse than a mild illness, or have other significant health conditions such as heart or lung disease, or a weakened immune system, you should call your doctor or other medical provider to discuss testing for COVID-19 and inform them that you received this letter.
- **If you feel very sick and believe you need to see a doctor immediately:** Call ahead to the emergency department and let them know you received this letter so they can make appropriate arrangements.
- **If you feel ill with any of these symptoms but do not consult a healthcare provider:** Stay home and avoid being around others while you have symptoms. You should stay home until at least 7 days have passed since you started feeling sick, and at least 3 days have passed without having a fever, whichever is longer.
- **If you do not feel ill:** You do not need to be tested. There is no test for the disease until you have symptoms, so you should not plan to get tested before you feel sick. Not everyone who comes into contact with an ill person will get sick, and you may not have caught the virus.

The virus spreads short distances of a few feet when someone infected with the virus coughs or sneezes. Only those who are close to a person with symptoms of COVID-19 for an extended period of time are likely to catch the virus this way. It can also be spread on surfaces touched by someone who is ill.

There is not a vaccine that will prevent infection, but you can take the steps listed below to help protect yourself and your family.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough but not with your hand.
- Try to avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean the surfaces of your home, especially areas touched often like doorknobs, counters, etc.
- Stay at home if you are sick except to get medical attention.

For any additional questions, contact:

DHEC's CareLine – 1-855-472-3432 (7 days a week from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

Sincerely,

Henry G. Potter, MD MPH
Midlands Region Medical Director