

## Medical Pandemic Plan

### General Information:

There are many infectious diseases that can cause a medical pandemic in a community or on a university campus, such as influenza, Norwalk virus, or SARS. When a pandemic occurs, there are many potential impacts on the campus. Students may be unable to attend classes due to illness, and employees may be unable to come to work due to illness or the need to care for family members. In addition, because of the close contact in classes and residences and many opportunities for public gatherings, there is a significant risk that a disease could spread quickly through the campus community. This plan is intended to provide guidelines for the campus on how to respond at varying levels of pandemic, from minor impacts to full closure.

### Prevention and Preparation:

NSAC will have a routine program to educate the campus community on how to prevent the spread of disease. When there is pandemic warning or the potential for an imminent pandemic on campus, there will be increased information available. Students and staff will be told to stay away from work and/or class if they become ill with the disease symptoms. Information on potential infection and prevention will be made available in the following ways:

- posters will be displayed around campus about proper sanitation, disease symptoms, and prevention
- directions on the importance of and proper technique for hand washing will be displayed in each washroom
- information will be provided in residences and the dining hall
- updates and information will be sent to students and staff by e-mail

Maintenance and janitorial staff will be trained and directed to sanitize public areas (doorknobs, light switches, handrails, shared computer terminals, shared telephones, etc.) and provide more frequent cleaning in high traffic areas. In addition, hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in public areas, particularly in the residences and food service areas.

In the event of a pandemic, there is a risk that there may not be sufficient employees to provide critical functions on campus. To help address this problem, the campus units will conduct a skills inventory of all staff to determine if there are people on campus who could assist with critical functions if necessary.

### Communication:

During a pandemic situation, communication is critical to preventing both further spread of the disease and panic among the community. All communication will be coordinated through the campus Public Relations Officer. Communication strategies will be different depending on the intended audience, as outlined below.

- Employees:
  - information will be provided and updated regularly on the NSAC website and through the NSAC news

- e-mail updates through GroupWise on current conditions will be provided as necessary
- employees will be telephoned, if necessary, in the event of campus closure or other urgent action
- Students:
  - information will be provided and updated regularly on the NSAC website, with urgent updates being delivered on the web portal
  - updates will be sent regularly by e-mail
  - information on prevention and current conditions will be provided on computer displays around campus
  - students may be contacted by telephone in the event of campus closure or other urgent action
- Parents:
  - information will be provided and updated regularly on the NSAC website and RSS feeds
  - recorded information may be provided through a 1-800-phone line
  - parents may be invited to subscribe to an e-mail distribution list that can be used to e-mail general information as well as pandemic updates
- Community:
  - information will be provided and updated regularly on the NSAC website and RSS feeds
  - NSAC Facebook and Twitter accounts will be updated regularly
  - the campus will provide regular media releases and RSS feeds, as necessary
  - information may be posted on the NSAC sign on Pictou Road
  - recorded information may be provided through a 1-800-phone line
  - the Assistant Dean for Health Services will be the designated contact for local public health agencies, and will be responsible for relaying public health information to the PR office for distribution to the campus community

**Continuity of Operations:**

The campus will develop and maintain an employee skills inventory, which will be distributed to all managers. Employees may be asked to help in other areas where they have expertise to ensure maintenance of critical functions.

Each department must identify critical functions and develop a plan for maintaining them with limited staffing. The plan must identify the point at which an inability to maintain critical functions would require campus closure. The plan should also identify functions that could be done from home and employees who could work from home for a limited period of time, if necessary.

Each department must also identify a lead person for continuity of operations planning, with an alternate. The department lead shall be responsible for:

- keeping track of number of employees out with the illness and reporting to the VP Administration's office

- contacting others on campus with skills to assist with critical functions, when necessary
- informing Emergency Operations Director (VP Administration or designee) of inability to maintain critical functions, if necessary

**Health Services:**

The Assistant Dean for Health Services will take the lead on planning and implementing the education and prevention program for the campus. Health Services will organize vaccination clinics, when a vaccine is available for the pandemic illness. The student Peer Educators will help with educating the student community through workshops and newsletters.

In partnership with the Residence Manager, Health Services staff will track the occurrence of illness in students in residence, make the determination about when a student should be isolated, and refer students to outside medical assistance when necessary. The Assistant Dean will regularly advise the Emergency Operations Director regarding the level of infection and the potential for a need for closure of the campus. All students who are ill will be provided information on symptoms, self-care, and when to seek medical assistance. They may also be provided appropriate supplies, such as masks or thermometers, as needed and available.

**Academic Operations:**

A pandemic situation could result in a significant number of students missing classes and being unable to complete assignments. In such circumstances, students should communicate with instructors to determine how best to complete the missed coursework. If a student cannot complete a course or term due to illness, she/he should communicate with the Registrar and her/his academic advisor regarding options and procedures.

If an instructor is unable to teach due to the pandemic, she/he should work with the department head to determine the most appropriate way to continue instruction for the students.

In the event that the campus is closed for a period of time, the Administration will determine whether there is a need to extend the academic year to allow all students to complete the planned coursework.

Departments that have active research projects that cannot be paused, as well as those with animal and plant care responsibility, must have plans for research and care continuity.

**Residence and Dining Services:**

Residence and Dining services will play a central role in a pandemic situation. People live in close proximity in the residence halls, sharing bathroom and sleeping spaces, and the dining hall is a significant gathering space for students. Without careful planning and implementation, they could play a significant role in accelerating the spread of the disease. Therefore, it is critical that both the Residences and Dining Services are active participants in the prevention and education process.

Janitorial and dining hall staff will be trained on sterilization/sanitizing techniques and will be actively targeting high-traffic areas. Information on disease symptoms and prevention will be prominently displayed in the residence and dining halls. RAs and Dons will educate students about disease prevention. All students in residence will be instructed to report illness to Health Services either in-person or by e-mail, in addition to notifying their Don and/or RAs.

In the event that students in residence are confirmed to be infected during a pandemic, they should be isolated to prevent the spread of infection. The following guidelines should be used for isolation planning. **The numbers indicated are guidelines only; decisions regarding the level of isolation necessary shall be made depending on the existing circumstances, based on factors such as the severity of the illness in question and the rapidity with which it is spreading.**

- 1-10 students: move sick students to vacant rooms or the guest suites/apartments, if possible, or to rooms with other sick students
- 10-30 students: move sick students to one wing/section of a floor and move healthy students out to other rooms
- more than 30 students: isolate sick students on a single floor and evacuate healthy students to other floors or houses
- If more than 30 students in residence are ill at one time, or the disease is spreading rapidly, the Residence Manager should consult with the AVP for Students and the Emergency Operations Director regarding whether residences should be closed

The Residence Manager and Dons may determine that it is necessary to limit guest access to residence halls to limit exposure and spread of illness.

If students in isolation have been moved to a single area for isolation, dining services will make arrangements for food and beverages to be delivered to a common area near the students who are in isolation. If students remain spread throughout the residence halls, ~~the current practice of authorizing another student to deliver food from the dining hall shall be followed~~ Resident Assistants will be designated to deliver meals. Health Services will provide masks and instruction on how to use them effectively to individuals who need to have contact with the students in isolation. Sick students will be provided information on the illness, supplies to assist with self-care, and direction on when to seek additional medical care.

If the residences are closed, the Residence Manager shall work with other staff to notify all students and parents of the closure. Students who are unable to travel home due to distance or pandemic travel restrictions may be allowed to stay in residence. The Residence Manager will work with Dining Services to ensure that there is limited food service available for those students. No guests will be allowed in the residences during the period of closure. Students shall be notified of the expected date for re-opening the residences and may not return to the residences prior to that date.

**Campus Closure:**

During a pandemic, the Emergency Operations Director may determine that non-academic group events should be canceled to limit the spread of infection. This would apply to activities such as:

- varsity, club, and recreational activities
- speakers or performances
- social activities (parties, dances, pub nights)
- non-instructional college gatherings

Campus visitors and outside groups who have reserved campus facilities will be informed of the pandemic status. Such visits and events may be cancelled at the discretion of the Emergency Operations Director.

In consultation with Colchester Public Health Services, the Emergency Operations Director shall determine when campus closure is required, based on the number of students and staff who are ill and the ability of the staff to maintain critical functions. If the campus is closed, all employees, students and parents will be notified, and announcements will be sent to the community (see Communication, above). Residences will be closed, with provision for students who cannot return home (see Residence and Dining Services, above). During a campus closure, security will follow existing emergency plans to secure the campus. The Emergency Operations Director shall either set a date for re-opening or announce the process for informing students and staff of the date for re-opening. Departments should follow their business continuity plans for continuing animal and plant care and research experiments.

**Post-Pandemic:**

If the campus was closed due to the pandemic, information about the campus re-opening must be relayed to students, parents, staff, and community. The established education and disease prevention program should continue to prevent future incidents.

After the pandemic has passed, the Emergency Operations group shall evaluate the effectiveness of this plan and adjust it as necessary.