GUIDANCE ON CAMPUS NOTIFICATIONS

If there is a faculty member, staff employee or student on campus who has symptoms of COVID-19, but has not had a laboratory-confirmed case:

Because of the lack of broad community tests, if members of a campus community report symptoms of COVID-19 but they are in a low-risk group and unable to get tested, the campus should assume that the individuals have COVID-19. Symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Cough
- Body aches

Any individual experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19 should contact his or her primary doctor or CHI/Bryan/Nebraska Medicine call lines for further screenings, including assessing the individual’s risk, and for further care instructions. The doctor will help the individual determine if the individual needs to be seen at a clinic, go to the emergency room, or self-care at home.

These individuals should isolate themselves, and their close contacts should quarantine, as defined below, for at least 14 days, unless an individual is able to prove that he or she does not have COVID-19. Individuals may be able to prove they do not have COVID-19 if they can confirm something else caused their symptoms (positive influenza diagnosis, bacterial pneumonia, etc.). That determination would need to be made by a health care professional.

Campus administrators who have been notified that an individual has these symptoms should attempt to obtain that person’s consent to contact the individual’s close contacts. In this case, close contacts are the individual’s employer (if applicable), co-workers in close contact with the individual 2-3 days before symptoms, roommates of the individual if the individual is a student currently living on campus, and any other member of the University community with known close contact with the individual. People who had close contact with the individual (less than 6 feet), need to go into quarantine for at least 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. There is no need for a broader announcement to the University community, the individual’s entire department, or the entire building where the individual lives. Such notices may unnecessarily increase panic or anxiety among people who were unlikely to have had close contact with the individual.

When making notices to the University community, keep in mind the individual’s right to privacy, although such rights are typically more limited during a national health emergency. Notices related to employees should be limited to those who need to know and should convey only as much information as necessary to inform those who need to know. Students are still protected by FERPA, and by HIPAA if they have been seen by a Student Health Center operated by Nebraska Medicine. There is, however, a limited emergency exception that would allow disclosure of some non-directory information of a student so long as there is an articulable and significant threat that requires such disclosure and the disclosure is made to “appropriate parties” (such as public health officials) whose knowledge of the information is necessary to
protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. When the University makes a disclosure under the health or safety emergency provision in FERPA, the University is specifically required to record the articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individual that formed the basis for the disclosure and the parties to whom the agency or institution disclosed the information. Such information should be sent to the University Registrar and filed in the student’s records. If a notice is sent to the wider campus community, the notice should not contain personally identifiable information regarding students. Only the information needed to ensure the safety and well-being of the University community should be disclosed.

If there is a faculty member, staff employee or student on campus who has been exposed to someone with a laboratory-confirmed case:

If a member of the faculty, staff or a student on campus informs the University that he or she has been exposed to someone with a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19, whether on-campus or off-campus, that individual should go into self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Notice should be sent to the individual’s supervisor, as applicable. There is no need for a broader announcement unless the individual develops symptoms of COVID-19 or has a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19.

If there is a faculty member, staff employee or student on campus who has a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19:

The individual should follow the advice of the individual’s medical provider and the local health department or the Department of Health and Human Services.

At a minimum, the individual will need to self-isolate, as defined below, for a minimum of 14 days and 72 hours and be symptom-free. All others who had close contact with the individual (less than 6 feet in the 2-3 days before symptoms appeared) must self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. This includes all family members or those living with the infected person.

The appropriate campus administrator should contact the individual’s close contacts. In this case, close contacts are the individual’s employer (if applicable), co-workers in close contact with the individual 2-3 days before symptoms, roommates of the individual if the individual is a student currently living on campus, and any other member of the University community with known close contact with the individual. People who had close contact with the individual (less than 6 feet), need to go into quarantine for at least 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.

A confirmed case of COVID-19 is covered under the provisions of the Clery Act. Because this is a matter of public health and safety, notices should be tailored to alert the community of people who need to know the information immediately. This could be the entire building where a student lives, the laboratory where someone is working or other communities on campus that likely had interactions with the individual. Because many of the University community are working remotely or have returned to their permanent residences, a campus-wide notice that typically occurs under the Clery Act is likely not needed here. Instead, campus communicators should update the broader campus community as cases of COVID-19 are confirmed by local health departments and shared with the campus. Such notices could include an

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updated number of confirmed cases in a daily campus communication or a campus-wide email sent at set intervals to alert the broader campus community.

**Definitions:**

**Isolation:** the separation or restriction of activities of an **ill person** with a contagious disease from those who are well. Have others shop for you, clean up frequently after yourself if possible, and sanitize high touch surfaces that you contact often.

**Quarantine:** the separation or restriction of movement of **well persons** who might have been exposed to a communicable disease while determining if they become ill. You can go outside, but use social distancing always and avoid high risk persons. Sanitize any high touch surfaces that you contact often.

Last Updated: March 25, 2020