

Dear Members of the Campus Community:

As you know, avian influenza (subtype H5N1), also known as the “bird flu,” is a hot topic in the media these days. Despite the fact that millions of birds, domestic and wild, have been culled (picked out), the infection has been persistent in the bird population and continues to spread along the flight paths of migratory birds. Most of the laboratory confirmed cases in humans have resulted from direct contact with infected birds with only a few cases occurring from human-to-human contact.

Scientists, public health authorities, and government officials have expressed concern that a pandemic could be sparked by the virus if it mutates in a way that allows for sustainable transmission from person to person. The World Health Organization and U.S. health authorities are making preparations in the event a pandemic occurs and has urged all communities to do so. We are following this recommendation and are making plans to prepare our campus community as well.

Emergency response plans are being developed university wide in collaboration with many other departments on campus and state and community agencies. We are working to ensure that on-campus health care providers and first responders are prepared to respond by providing ongoing education about avian influenza, rehearsing emergency drills, and having medical supplies and equipment readily available.

We are also following the latest developments by monitoring the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention websites, following the guidelines of the American College Health Association, maintaining an open line of communication with our local health department and hospitals, and benchmarking the activities of other colleges and universities.

Finally, we realize that you may have many questions about avian influenza. To help answer some of those questions, we have prepared the following frequently asked questions and answers.

You can also learn more about avian influenza and the pandemic threat at the following websites:

**World Health Organization**

[www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza)

**Centers for Disease Control**

[www.cdc.gov/flu/avian](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian)

**Department of Health and Human Services**

<http://pandemicflu.gov>

**Penn State University Health Services**

[www.sa.psu.edu/uhs/pandemic.cfm](http://www.sa.psu.edu/uhs/pandemic.cfm)

Rest assured that we are taking proactive measures to be prepared in case the avian flu affects our campus community. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Joy Himmel, Psy.D., APRN.BC, LPC, NCC  
Director, Health and Wellness Center