

October 2009  
Dear Students,

The flu season is upon us and we wanted to make sure you all stay well and are aware of what Douglas Education Center (DEC) is doing to prepare for this potential issue. The flu has hit our area earlier than usual this season. There is an increase in cases in our community, and with the swine flu added to the mix, everyone needs to take extra precautions in preventing the spread of disease.

We have placed hand sanitizer dispensers in every building. These sanitizers do not totally kill the flu virus, but can help lessen the spread of bacteria and create an environment that hampers the spread of viruses. Please do not overuse the sanitizer, as it also kills good bacteria on your hands.

You will also see disinfectant wipes in all the computer labs and common rooms, so that you can wipe down keyboards and other equipment that are used by numerous individuals. Please do so before and after you use the equipment. These wipes are NOT to be used on monitors.

Our housekeeping personnel will be expending additional effort to make sure the facilities are as sanitized as possible. If you have any concerns on the cleanliness of a building, please contact the Facilities Manager, Josh Retos at [jretos@dec.edu](mailto:jretos@dec.edu) or 724-684-3684 x112.

Attached to this letter are handouts explaining the differences between the flu and a cold, and on proper hand washing techniques.

Please refer to the symptom handout if you are unsure about your illness. DEC encourages you to go to the doctor if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms. When you are there, make sure to get an excuse from the doctor if you will be missing class stating the period of time in which you are to be absent from school. Anyone with a physician-diagnosed case of the flu will not be permitted in class. A great Web site for detailed flu-related information is [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

Locally, you may go to the Primary Care Facility of Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services (SPHS), located in the Eastgate plaza (where Subway is) at the end of town. This center will be administering seasonal flu vaccines as well as providing other health services. The services are based on a sliding income scale, so if you do not have health insurance, you will still be able to receive the care you need at a reasonable cost. To contact this facility for more information, please call 724-684-8999 or visit [www.sphs.org](http://www.sphs.org).

Attendance on this matter will be handled on a case-to-case basis, depending on the severity of your illness. You will need to speak with Education Department personnel to determine what actions you will need to take with respect to your absences.

DEC also reminds you to wash your hands often, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing (with your arm, not your hand), and if you are ill, it is better to remain at home than to return to school and spread the virus to others. Thank you and we wish you a healthy year ahead.

Sincerely,  
Tara Darazio, Public Relations Coordinator