

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) March 2020

Preparing for Potential Infection in West Virginia Communities

Since February 2020, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health has been following an increase in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. The Bureau for Public Health monitors Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updates, hospital admissions, and other data to determine the potential risk to citizens in West Virginia from the virus.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

PERSON-TO-PERSON TRANSMISSION

- Occurs via small droplets from the nose or mouth of the infected person when they cough, sneeze, or exhale.
- Maintain 2 meter (6 ft) distance between yourself and anyone coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home if you feel sick. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance.

PREVENTION

- Isolating sick and diagnosed individuals.
- Encourage proper handwashing.
- Cleaning and sanitizing surfaces.
- Provide education about COVID-19.
- Discourage sharing food, drinks, etc.

GUIDANCE FOR IHE THAT DO NOT HAVE COVID-19 IDENTIFIED IN THEIR COMMUNITY

- Review, update, and implement emergency operation plans (EOP).
- Reference key resources while reviewing, updating, and implementing the EOP.
- Ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Develop information-sharing systems with partners.
- Monitor and plan for absenteeism.
- Establish procedures for students and staff who are sick on campus.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning.
- Create plans to communicate accurate and timely information to the IHE community.
- Review CDC's Guidance for Businesses and Employers.

GUIDANCE FOR IHE WITH IDENTIFIED CASES OF COVID-19 IN THEIR COMMUNITY

- Determine if, when, and for how long the IHE may need to suspend classes and postpone or cancel events and activities.
- If an ill student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case:
 - ◊ Local health officials may recommend temporary class suspension and event or activity cancellation.
 - ◊ IHE should work with the local health department and other relevant leadership to communicate the possible COVID-19 exposure.
 - ◊ IHE administrators should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students, staff, and faculty should return to campus and what additional steps are needed for the IHE community.

IF CLASSES ARE SUSPENDED, IHE CAN CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STEPS

- Temporarily cancel extracurricular group activities and large events.
- Discourage students and staff from gathering or socializing anywhere.
- Ensure continuity of education and research.
- Ensure continuity of safe housing.
- Ensure continuity of meal programs.
- Consider if and when to stop, scale back, or modify other support services on campus.

For additional information on COVID-19, please visit our webpage at: www.coronavirus.wv.gov

Questions and concerns can also be directed to the 24/7, toll-free COVID-19 information hotline at 1-800-887-4304