



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN
U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY
101 BUCHANAN ROAD
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21402-5100

23 September 2009

Dear Parents, Relatives, and Friends,

In a sincere effort to keep you informed of health related developments within the Brigade, I wanted to provide you with the most updated information regarding our seasonal flu and H1N1 situation. Our absolute priority remains the health and safety of the Brigade of Midshipmen. As such, the Academy's Health Clinic Staff, working in conjunction with my key senior staff members, are making every effort to care for our affected Midshipmen and prevent the spread of flu through preventative measures, proactive surveillance, and isolation of midshipmen that exhibit flue like symptoms.

On Monday morning, September 21st 2009, 38 midshipmen reported to Brigade Medical seeking treatment for flu-like symptoms. By the morning of September 22nd 2009, we had placed a total of 55 midshipmen in isolation. While the number of midshipmen who have been identified as having flu-related symptoms has increased in recent days, I can assure you that this number has not spread out of control mainly due to the strong precautionary measures implemented throughout the Brigade. As an important note, the H1N1 test results are generally not available for a number of days, usually after the flu has run its course through an individual. Therefore, none of the current cases have been positively identified yet as H1N1 flu.

As a determined precautionary measure, all midshipmen exhibiting flu-like symptoms are being isolated from the rest of the Brigade, faculty, and staff in accordance with established protocol and in order to prevent further spread of the virus. Due to the increased numbers of affected midshipmen, we have opted to open a temporary isolation ward within the basement area of Bancroft Hall, where many of the midshipmen have been relocated. This temporary isolation ward affords each of our midshipmen some degree of privacy within a central location and comes with complete access to bathrooms and showers. Additionally, food and laundry services are being provided directly to them in the isolation ward in the similar manner as their regular midshipman rooms. I have personally visited our Midshipmen in this isolation ward and we are in the process of bringing additional services like email and DVD players for their use. I am most proud of them as they deal with this unfortunate situation, but we are all pitching in to make their stay as comfortable and pain free as possible. They clearly need their rest.

Under guidance from my medical staff, I anticipate that most of these midshipmen will remain in isolation for approximately 3-4 days in order to ensure they get the proper medical care and do not spread the seasonal flu or H1N1 to the rest of the Brigade and other Naval Academy personnel. In the interim, the Brigade is staffing a 24 hour watch at the isolation ward, to ensure security, safety and a support network for all our isolated midshipmen. All watch standers and isolated midshipmen are wearing surgical masks as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of any germs in the vicinity of the isolation ward. Of course, if required, we are prepared to isolate a much larger portion of the Brigade if such action becomes necessary. If the need arises, I will promise to inform you as soon as possible.

As many of you may be aware, our 6-week academic reserve period begins on Monday, September 29th 2009. My staff is working very closely with the Academic Dean to ensure that all midshipmen are set up for success with regard to this important phase of their learning. I personally met with the Faculty Senate today to ensure that each sick midshipman is afforded the opportunity to workout a revised program with their professors to address any class work or exams they may have missed due to the isolation requirements. Again, we will do everything we can to promote a smooth return to the classrooms.

Currently, the FDA has approved the H1N1 vaccine and we anticipate receipt of the vaccine sometime in October 2009. Upon receipt, our medical staff is prepared to vaccinate all our personnel in a quick and efficient manner. Again, I'd ask that you continue to remain vigilant about your own health and consider visiting your own care provider at the first sign of the flu-like symptoms. For the most current information regarding preventative measures and cases, please refer to the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/. I will continue to keep you updated as any new H1N1 related developments arise.

NAVY BLUE & GOLD FOREVER!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt J. Klunder", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Klunder
Captain, U.S. Navy
Commandant of Midshipmen