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TO: The John Jay College Community

RE: Coronavirus Update: Stay Calm, Wash Your Hands, & Stay Home If You're Sick

You may have heard that New York now confirmed two cases of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19), a respiratory illness with flu-like symptoms. You should know that at John Jay, we are closely monitoring the latest updates and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), the New York State and City health departments, and [CUNY](#), and we have been working with our leadership team from across the college to share information and prepare for a variety of scenarios.

According to the CDC, **for the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low.** At the same time, there are a few things that you should know. I have been in close contact with Dean Ayman El-Mohandes, a physician, who leads CUNY's School of Public Health, and he has helpfully outlined key points for students, faculty, and staff to keep in mind:

- **Keep calm.** *At present, the flu is still a [bigger threat](#) and you can protect yourself and others by getting a flu shot, and by taking these other measures:*
- **Wash your hands.** *Get used to doing it often. And thoroughly. That means for at least 20 seconds, which is a surprisingly long time—about the time it takes to sing the ABC song once or the Happy Birthday song twice. Don't forget the backs of your hands. Water temperature doesn't matter, but the amount of time you scrub with soap does.*
- **Don't touch your face.** *Easier said than done for most of us, but try. Your mouth, nose and eyes are entry points for the virus, and your hands can transfer the virus from surfaces.*
- **Stay home if you're sick. Please.** *And contact your health provider if you have a fever and respiratory symptoms and have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has traveled from areas under a [CDC level 3 warning](#), such as China, South Korea, Iran, and Italy. If you're coughing or sneezing, remember the vampire move: cough or sneeze into your elbow. Or use a tissue. And then wash your hands again.*

- **You don't need to wear a mask.** Unless you have the virus or you're a health care worker. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "There is no evidence that wearing a mask – of any type – protects non-sick persons."
- **We're in good hands.** The CDC is closely monitoring COVID-19. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is a leading health department in the world. Their staff has extensive experience in managing outbreaks. We can trust that their information and guidance will be honest and accurate.

Where to Get Help

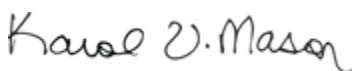
We will continue to keep our campus community informed as new developments occur. You can find these updates and resources on our [webpage](#).

The most important thing to remember is that if you feel sick, please stay home and contact your health provider. If you feel you can't afford or are otherwise unable to seek care, please call 311. You should know that hospital staff cannot ask you about your immigration status or deny you care based on your ability to pay. If you're on campus and you become ill, please go to [John Jay College Student Health Services](#) in L.68 NB or call 212-237-8052. There are also resources to assist you if you are feeling anxious. Students can go to the Wellness Center located in L68.05 or call 212-237-8111. Employees can access counseling services at 855-492-3633 or by logging in at the [Deer Oaks website](#) using "cuny" (all lowercase) as your username and password.

Provost Yi Li is also working with faculty leadership to ensure that faculty are prepared to offer reasonable accommodations for any affected John Jay students. The College webpage will be updated to include resources from the Provost's office.

At John Jay, our commitment to the ideals of justice, inclusivity, and equity do not waver even in times of uncertainty or urgency. During this time, it is important as a community that we remember there is no place for blaming or stigmatizing those who appear to be Chinese or from countries significantly impacted by the virus. By coming together in this uncertain time, we can continue to foster a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members of our community.

Thank you,



Karol V. Mason
President

FAQs from CUNY's School of Public Health

The [CDC site](#) has the most comprehensive and helpful information about COVID-19 for the public. We recommend it very highly. The [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#) has invaluable information for New Yorkers. The [latest coronavirus update from CUNY](#) is very helpful. New York State has a coronavirus health hotline: 1-888-364-3065. And if you're interested in detailed information about what we now know about COVID-19, you can check out [this article in JAMA](#).

But here are a few basic facts:

What is the coronavirus?

Coronaviruses have been with us for a long time. They are a family of viruses that can cause respiratory illness in people, from colds to SARS and MERS. Coronaviruses circulate among animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats, and occasionally make the leap to humans.

The name corona refers to the structure of the virus, which has a halo of crownlike spikes.

The current virus was first called novel coronavirus because it is new, or at least newly jumped to humans. It is now more commonly referred to as COVID-19. (The CDC makes a further distinction, calling the virus itself “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes “COVID-19.”)

How sick does COVID-19 make a person?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. Symptoms are cough, fever, and shortness of breath. Current estimates are that 80-85% of those infected will have mild symptoms. Others will experience more severe respiratory distress and require hospitalization.

Is there a treatment?

Not yet. Scientists and drug companies are working feverishly to test antiviral drugs that will be effective on COVID-19, based on what they know about what’s worked on other coronaviruses like SARS and MERS. An [NIH-sponsored clinical trial](#) is already underway on a promising drug called remdesivir.

For the minority of infected people who develop severe symptoms, hospitals can provide supportive care.

Is there a vaccine?

No. Experts are working amazingly quickly to identify and produce a vaccine and are making progress, but the extensive testing that has to take place before a vaccine can be administered to humans takes a long time.

What about travel?

There are a number of official travel advisory sites, but the [CDC Traveler’s Health page](#) is the one we trust most. At present the CDC has listed China, South Korea, Iran, and Italy under a level 3 warning (avoid nonessential travel) and Japan under a level 2 warning (practice enhanced precautions).