

Dear UNE Community,

In recent days, you have likely heard intensifying reports about a new coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China. According to the latest reports out of China, this new disease has sickened several thousands and led to over 130 deaths.

There are currently no cases under investigation or reported in Maine. The threat to Maine residents and the University of New England (UNE) community is considered low, but outbreaks of new viruses in humans are always a public health concern.

On Friday, January 31, the Maine CDC is hosting a conference call with County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) directors as well as regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) directors to discuss the 2019-nCoV outbreak and the preparations that Maine CDC is taking. UNE will have representatives participating in this conference call to ensure the health and safety of the entire UNE community.

Many of the symptoms of the novel coronavirus mimic those of the flu, the common cold, or other illnesses. Seek immediate medical attention if you are experiencing fever or cough or having difficulty breathing. The best preventative steps for any communicable disease include simple but important measures to practice as part of your daily routine, but especially during flu season:

- Do not attend classes, work, or University events if you are ill. You should stay home except when seeking medical care and should avoid contact with others.
- Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue or your shirtsleeves — not your hands — when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

The University will continue to work with Maine CDC, County EMA, and EMS officials. If the situation warrants, we will follow up with additional communication.

Sincerely,

Jane E. Carreiro, D.O.

*Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine*