INFLUENZA POLICY FOR HSOP EMPLOYEES

The purpose of the policy is to outline the procedure to be followed by employees (this includes both faculty and staff members) who have contracted influenza or have developed influenza-like symptoms. This policy considers the current high prevalence of both seasonal and H1N1 influenza and the likelihood of a much higher level of infection for the 2009-2010 influenza season. These policies build upon the policies of Auburn University with specific modifications to address unique the HSOP’s unique circumstances.

Influenza continues to be a significant health care burden resulting in absenteeism and is particularly concerning because of the risk of transfer of the virus from one person to another. Influenza infections include seasonal influenza and the current pandemic of H1N1 influenza.

Prevention Procedures
HSOP employees are strongly encouraged to receive an annual seasonal influenza vaccination. Employees are also strongly encouraged to receive the H1N1 vaccination or other influenza vaccinations that may become available.

Influenza vaccination will be the employee’s responsibility including any associated cost of vaccination. Employees should also exercise appropriate prevention measures as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) including frequent hand washing, covering mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing, and avoiding, whenever possible, persons that are known or suspected of having influenza.

It is the responsibility of employees to take those actions that will minimize the spread of influenza to other members of the Auburn University community, and particularly to patients. Employees are asked to self-isolate should they develop influenza-like symptoms.

Infection Control and management
Policies related attendance
Employees with influenza or influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, extreme tiredness, and possibly diarrhea and/or vomiting) should self-isolate and not come to work. Employees with influenza-like symptoms should not return to work until they have been afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Employees are to notify their supervisor of their illness and absence at the earliest possible time. Supervisors may ask employees with influenza-like symptoms to leave the building and return to their place of residence; employees are expected to comply with such requests.

Given the severity of the current influenza outbreak, employees are strongly encouraged to seek medical care should they develop influenza-like symptoms. This will facilitate proper evaluation and the timely provision of antiviral medications to appropriate individuals. Any medical evaluation and treatment will be the employee’s responsibility.

During the current pandemic, it is possible that the demand for medical services will greatly outstrip the supply. Given this, HSOP employees will not be required to provide physician excuses in order to receive excused absences from work, yet medical care is strongly recommended.
Employees with family members who have influenza, but are not ill themselves, will be expected to report for work and not allowed to work from home. This does not preclude the use of sick leave by employees in order to care for sick individuals in their immediate families, as per University policy.

**Policies for Faculty Members Located at Practice Sites**
In addition to HSOP polices, faculty members based at practice sites are expected to adhere to the specific policies and procedures of the practice site. Return to the practice site will follow practice site policies and procedures, which should be based on CDC recommendations regarding length of time away from the health care setting.

**Policy Maintenance**
This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure current standards and procedures are adhered to and that current CDC recommendations are being followed.

**Additional references**
1. CDC. 2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu); [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)
2. CDC. Influenza; [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/)