May 15, 2020

Northeast Higher Education District

COVID-19 Back-to-Campus Preparedness Plan

The colleges of the Northeast Higher Education District (NHED)—Hibbing Community College, Itasca Community College, Mesabi Range College, Vermilion Community College, and Rainy River Community College—are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our students, faculty, staff, and members of our campus community. To ensure that, we have developed this Back-to-Campus Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing guidance offered in Emergency Executive Order 20-40, Allowing Workers in Certain Non-Critical Sectors to Return to Safe Workplaces. We are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 on our campuses, and that requires full cooperation among students, faculty, staff, and members of our campus community. Only through a cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our campuses.

This plan addresses the resumption of face-to-face classes in response to Executive Order 20-52. That order allows the resumption of courses where students in their last semester need on-campus instruction in order to meet graduation requirements. The plan will need additional modification if face-to-face courses are needed for summer session 2020. Support services that are currently operating online will remain in that mode, except in cases where a supervisor determines on-campus services become necessary.

Campus leaders, supervisors, employees, and students are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this Plan. Northeast Higher Education District leaders and supervisors have the full support of the Minnesota State system in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

Employees that can continue to effectively work remotely should continue that practice. If on-campus work is necessary, the supervisor will develop a workplan with the employee.

We are serious about safety and health and keeping our students and employees safe. Your involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful Campus COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Our Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines and federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and addresses:

- Hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- Engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- Housekeeping – cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination;
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- Communications and training that will be provided to managers and workers; and
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.
Screening and policies for those exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Employees and students have been informed that they are required to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess the health status of employees and students prior to entering campus and for employees and students to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

Employees and students should NOT come to any campus location if they are sick and/or believe any of these conditions apply to them: (1) they have a temperature or fever greater than 100.4 degrees (2) they have a new or worsening cough (3) they are experiencing shortness of breath and/or (4) they have been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days.

For students/faculty in the classroom and/or lab setting:
Before a student enters a classroom or lab, faculty should ask the following questions:  
(1) Do you have a new or worsening cough?  
(2) Do you have new or worsening shortness of breath?  
(3) Do you have two or more of the following symptoms?  
   • Temperature/Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above  
   • Chills  
   • Headache  
   • Sore throat  
   • Muscle pain,  
   • Loss of taste or smell  
(4) Have you been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days?

If ALL four of the ABOVE are NO, the individual can enter the program space. The individual must proceed to wash their hands before having any contact with other students or other staff/instructors.

If ANY of the ABOVE are YES, the individual WILL NOT BE ALLOWED to enter or nor participate and will be required to return home. They should then stay home until:
   • They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) AND  
   • Other symptoms have improved (for example, when the cough or shortness of breath has improved) AND  
   • At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared AND  
   • It has been 14 days since they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

If an individual becomes sick during the day, they should go home. If a student is asked to go home, faculty should report the incident to their supervisor immediately.
**For employees:**

Employees must follow the normal process of informing supervisors if they are sick or experiencing symptoms while at home or on campus. If an employee feels sick and/or feel that any of the criteria outlined above apply to them, they must notify their supervisor immediately.

Northeast Higher Education District through Minnesota State and Minnesota Management and Budget has implemented leave policies that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Accommodations for workers with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions have been implemented. There are certain types of COVID leave and FMLA that may be available to you. Should you find yourself or a family member in a health situation due to COVID, please discuss with your supervisor, which paid leave you may be eligible for.

The practice of the Northeast Higher Education District is to follow Minnesota Department of Health and local health department guidance and direction on informing workers if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 on campus and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. In addition, the Human Resources office will manage any confidential medical information to protect the privacy of workers’ health status and health information.

**Handwashing**

Employees and students are being instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their time on campus, prior to any mealtimes, and after using the toilet. All visitors to campus facilities should wash their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Hand sanitizer dispensers with sanitizer that is greater than 60% alcohol are available at entrances and at multiple campus locations.

**Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

Employees and visitors are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters placed throughout our campuses.

Masks or cloth face coverings can be worn to help control infection from people who may be infected but are asymptomatic. They may provide some limited protection from being infected if exposed. Employees, when in public spaces, and students are encouraged to wear a mask or cloth face covering to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
Here are a few important things to keep in mind:

- Masks or cloth face coverings can help with preventing your germs from infecting others, especially in situations where you may spread the virus without symptoms.

- Wearing a mask or cloth face coverings does not protect you from others who may spread the virus. So, whether or not you wear a mask or cloth face coverings, you still need to wash your hands frequently, cover your cough, and practice social distancing by keeping at least 6 feet of space between people.

- People who are sick should still stay home. Wearing a mask or cloth face coverings does not mean people who are sick should go out into the community. If you are sick and need to go to the doctor, call your health care provider before going in and wear a mask or cloth face coverings to the clinic.

**Social distancing**

Social distancing is being implemented on campus through the following engineering and administrative controls:

1. Employees that can work remotely should continue to do so.
2. Employees shall be offered flexible work hours, staggered shifts, and additional shifts to reduce the number of employees in the workplace at one time.
3. If required to come to the campus, consider the necessity of the visit and the appropriate time of that visit so as to limit the number of employees and students on campus at the same time.
4. Employees and students are asked to maintain six feet of distance between colleagues and visitors.
5. Be aware of and avoid crowded spaces, including break or lunchroom, elevators, and restrooms.
6. Vehicles will only be signed out to single occupants and cleaned and disinfected after use.
7. Meetings or gatherings of greater than 10 should be done virtually, and in-person meetings should be extremely limited.
8. Cloth face coverings are recommended for spaces where social distancing cannot be maintained.
9. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant will be available in all labs that are open for face-to-face courses.
10. Interactions with the public will remain mostly online at this time. If employees are in an area that has contact with the public, signs and barriers will serve as a reminder for proper social distance length.
11. Students should report any concerns to their faculty who will forward them to their supervisor. Employees should also report their concerns to their supervisor.
Staff and visitors are prohibited from gathering in groups and confined areas and from using other workers’ personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices, or other personal work tools and equipment.

**Housekeeping**

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented but require the efforts of faculty and staff that are on campus. Each campus has developed protocols to ensure that there is routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, vehicles, and common areas in the campus environment, including classrooms, labs, restrooms, common areas, break rooms, meeting rooms, and drop-off and pick-up locations. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, printers and copy machines, credit card readers, delivery equipment, etc.

**Communications and training**

This plan was communicated by email to all employees and students on or before May 17, 2020. Training and guidelines were given to all maintenance staff in regards to proper cleaning per the CDC. Additional communication and training will be ongoing through email, zoom, campus flyers posted, and website publication. Appendix A of this plan contains further guidelines on handwashing, respiratory etiquette, social distancing, and housekeeping. This information will also be posted on each campus. Leaders and supervisors are to monitor how effective the program has been implemented by ensuring all housekeeping guidelines are completed appropriately and social distancing is occurring. Employees and students are to work through this new program together and update the communication strategies and training as necessary.

This plan has been certified by Northeast Higher Education District leadership and was shared throughout the campus community on or before May 17, 2020. It will be updated on the colleges’ websites as necessary.

Certified by:

Michael Raich, Ph.D.

Northeast Higher Education District President
Appendix A – Additional Resources

General
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV
www.dli.mn.gov

Handwashing
www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html
www.cdc.gov/handwashing https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze
www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html
www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

Social distancing
www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html

Housekeeping

Operating Instruction on Campus Management in Minnesota State

Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19
www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html

Training
www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf
www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf