

March 5, 2020

To the University Community:

As you are aware, the growing outbreak of novel coronavirus, aka COVID-19, is a public health concern across the globe. As it is every day, the health and safety of our Slippery Rock University family – students, faculty and staff – is always our first priority.

And as many of you prepare to leave SRU for the March 8-15 spring break, we'd like to advise you of some important safety tips to keep yourselves and others healthy, while helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the flu, and other respiratory viruses.

While neither SRU or the surrounding communities have had any reported or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at this time, prevention is always key.

With that in mind, SRU asks that you exercise caution with possible travel abroad choices during spring break. Even if you are not traveling to China, Japan, Italy, South Korea or any other country currently experiencing high numbers of confirmed cases, you could still be exposed. Since individuals are thought to be contagious even before they show symptoms, the virus can easily spread. This could happen at large gatherings and venues, on cruise ships, in airports, on mass transit, etc.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel and has issued a Travel Warning Alert Level 3 to the following destinations:

- China
- South Korea
- Iran
- Italy
- Japan

Destinations with risk of community spread include:

- Singapore
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Vietnam

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. The extent of virus spread is not sustained or widespread enough to meet the criteria for a travel health notice at this time.

Although we are not able to fully prevent the spread of any virus, the following measures will help you to protect yourself and contain the potential spread to others:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze, for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue then throw the tissue in the trash. Immediately follow up with hand washing or sanitizing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth to prevent spreading germs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Keep surfaces clean, especially computer keyboards and mice, light switches, TV remotes, phones, door, and cabinet handles.
- **Whether before, during or after spring break, stay at home if you are sick.**

Specific to COVID-19, the virus can spread from an infected person to others through the air by coughing or sneezing; close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands; and touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before the washing of hands.

Symptoms of COVID-19 have reportedly been mild to severe respiratory illness with:

- Fever.
- Cough.
- Shortness of breath.

The CDC is a great resource for additional tips and includes helpful information about traveling domestically and internationally. Frequently Asked Questions about a variety of topics, including risk assessments, are also featured. For the most up to date information, [visit the CDC website by clicking here](#).

SRU's [Student Health Services](#) is monitoring the emerging facts about the disease and working to understand and enact best practices for screening and treating any students that may report with symptoms.

If you plan to travel outside of Pennsylvania during spring break or during the remainder of the semester, please notify Student Health Services prior to departure **AND/OR** prior to your return by [filling out this travel form](#).

Even if you are not feeling ill, please monitor your temperature twice daily and report any symptoms immediately to your personal medical provider or Student Health Services at 724.738.2052.

Wishing everyone a healthy spring break.

Sincerely,

William Behre
President