

February 28, 2020

Dear Iowa State Community,

I'm writing to inform you of additional precautions the university is taking in response to the spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Travel to impacted areas

Based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of State, we are restricting travel to South Korea. This follows a [decision](#) in January to prohibit university-sponsored travel to China. We continue to monitor travel alerts and will provide updates if conditions change.

The Office of Risk Management, the Study Abroad Center and Thielen Student Health Center are monitoring reports from public health and security organizations to assess the risk and decide whether to suspend any of our study abroad programs. We are taking every precaution based on the latest information in countries where our students are studying. Many answers to the questions you may have about study abroad programs and employee travel can be found in this [FAQ](#).

We know many of you have personal travel plans for Spring Break. Before leaving on your trip, check the latest alerts on the [Department of State](#) and [CDC](#) websites and reconsider travel to regions with a CDC level 3 or State Department level 4 advisory based on COVID-19. This information can change on a daily basis, so it is important to be aware of restrictions, screenings and quarantines that may affect travel to and from your destination.

Impact to campus

It is important to note that there have been no reported cases of COVID-19 on Iowa State's campus, or in the state of Iowa, and our overall risk remains low.

A campus workgroup continues to monitor developments both in Iowa and abroad, and we will make decisions on travel to additional locations based on CDC and State Department recommendations. We are also planning ahead for what may happen if travel to additional countries is restricted, as well as contingency planning should the World Health Organization declare a global pandemic, or if cases become widespread in Iowa.

Stay healthy, stay home if you're sick

While the risk of COVID-19 in Iowa remains low, you should always take steps to help prevent the spread of all respiratory viruses, including influenza. Public health officials recommend:

- Covering your nose and mouth with tissues when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Staying home if you are sick and avoid close contact with sick people.
- Washing hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth to avoid spreading germs.
- Improving your immune system by getting enough rest (eight hours is ideal), exercising regularly, and eating healthy.

Again, if you are sick stay home. If you're a student, it is your responsibility to notify your instructors as soon as possible. We ask faculty to give students the opportunity to make-up course work if they cannot attend class due to illness. Supervisors should provide flexibility for employees and encourage them to not come into work.

Trusted sources for information

University leaders are relying on information from national and regional public health officials to make decisions on travel and other precautions that may become necessary. We encourage you to do the same and turn to trusted sources for information about COVID-19. We all have a responsibility to limit the spread of misinformation.

Thielen Student Health Center receives regular updates from the CDC and Iowa Department of Public Health and you can find more information on the center's [website](#).

Again, I ask you to be supportive of our colleagues and students who may be concerned for family and friends in areas significantly affected by the outbreak. We encourage our campus community to speak out against [negative and stigmatizing](#) behavior. [Campus resources](#) are available if you need support.

Sincerely,

Wendy Wintersteen
President