COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Cases of presumed swine flu hit MU

By Michael Sewall
September 1, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — As of Friday, 48 students had reported flu-like symptoms at MU, pointing to what MU spokesman Christian Basi said "probably is" the H1N1 virus. The cases have not been confirmed but are likely to be H1N1 because it's the only flu strain currently circulating.

"The university is not requiring testing at this stage because it is too early in the season for the seasonal flu," Basi said. "As we have learned from the CDC, we are assuming anyone showing flu-like symptoms at this point has the H1N1 virus."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, symptoms of the H1N1 virus are similar to seasonal influenza.

Epidemiologist Eddie Hedrick, emerging infections coordinator for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, said people who are having flu-like symptoms are most likely being affected by the H1N1 strain, according to previous Missourian reporting.

The 48 students include those who either called or went to the Student Health Center. In an e-mail to students Monday afternoon, Chancellor Brady Deaton confirmed that the virus is "present" on campus and offered guidelines for dealing with the virus.

"Do not go to class," the e-mail advises in upper-case lettering. Students who show flu-like symptoms are advised to call the Student Health Center for consultation or to schedule an appointment.

"This enables timely and efficient care to be provided to those in need and minimizes the spread of influenza to others," Deaton said in the e-mail.

He advised sick students to notify their professors of the illness and to return to class when their temperature has been less than 100 degrees for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
Faculty Council Vice Chairman Bill Wiebold said students are strongly encouraged not to come to class if they're showing any signs of a fever, cough, muscle aches or other flu-like symptoms.

"If they are ill, they need to stay away from class," he said.

Provost Brian Foster sent an e-mail to faculty members Monday evening that gave tips to guide them through the flu outbreak. Foster told faculty to create a coverage plan for a situation in which they could not teach their classes; to be lenient with their attendance policies; to consider alternative assignments and deadlines; and to consider alternative content delivery systems for students who miss class, such as Blackboard and others found at the ET@Mo Web site.

On Thursday, the Faculty Council discussed the implications of H1N1 for their classes. Wiebold said he relayed information to the council about preparedness for the spread of the virus.

"As faculty, we need to be prepared for the possibility of increased absence in our classes," he said. "This is a unique experience that we may have this year. We need to be flexible when these absences occur."

A number of MU students were diagnosed with the H1N1 virus this summer. It was confirmed in May that graduate student Xueyang Bao, 30, had swine flu before he left campus for his wedding in China, and four of 40 students who traveled to South Korea in July to teach English were diagnosed with the H1N1 virus. The entire group was quarantined.

Outside of the immediate reaction on campus, MU and health officials are seeking ways to prevent a spread of the virus.

MU plans to offer free vaccinations for students for the H1N1 virus, but the vaccine won't be ready until at least mid- to late October, Basi said.

Students are encouraged to avoid contact with others. Residential Life staff will check on students and work with them to help isolate them as much as possible, Basi said.

Students showing symptoms are also advised to avoid dining halls and other common areas. They can order a meal from Campus Dining Services through their community adviser, CDS marketing manager Andrew Lough said. The student can request a meal to be prepared based on that day's menu, and the community adviser can pick it up with the student's ID number.
For more information and updates, students can go to MU Alert or Ask Dr. C on MU's Web site. Dr. C. is Michael Cooperstock, chief of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Disease, Immunology and Rheumatology in the Department of Child Health. The Dr. C site answers frequently asked questions about H1N1 flu and other issues.
The chancellor of the University of Missouri in Columbia has joined the chorus of schools asking Anheuser-Busch to stop selling Bud Light in cans with school colors.

"I ask that Anheuser-Busch immediately take action to terminate this marketing practice, which is now infringing upon the university's identity and reputation," Chancellor Brady Deaton wrote in a letter Friday to Frank Hellwig, an A-B lawyer. "Given the fact that underage college students make up a significant portion of the audience for Mizzou football, we are deeply concerned about the potential impact of such a campaign on our students."

A-B rolled out the fan can marketing promotion this month to coincide with the beginning of the football season and baseball playoffs eliciting complaints from colleges nationwide.

The brewer has said it would stop offering the cans where universities have requested it.

Belgium-based InBev bought St. Louis-based Anheuser Busch for $52 billion last year, creating Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world's largest brewer.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Community members protest cancellation of 'Pepper and Friends'

By Melissa Schupmann
August 31, 2009 | 3:02 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Protesters gathered at the south side of Jesse Hall in an attempt to convince Chancellor Brady Deaton and Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services Jacquelyn Jones to keep KOMU/Channel 8's "Pepper and Friends" on air. The show is slated for cancellation on Sept. 18.

Around 30 protesters, most of them carrying signs, practiced chants and a song rendition before marching single-file to the front of Jesse Hall, where Deaton's and Jones' offices are located. As previously reported by the Missourian, KOMU General Manager Marty Siddall announced the decision to cancel the 27-year-old morning variety show in May, citing a high cost of production as the cause.

"I hope we get their attention to reverse the decision," Nancy Atkinson, who has organized other protests against the cancellation, said. "If it's canceled on September 18, my TV will no longer be turned to Channel 8. Nothing else is worth watching."

Atkinson, a dedicated viewer of "Pepper and Friends" for 27 years, said she has never missed an episode of the local program. She said she has sent several letters to Deaton and Jones requesting information, but many of her questions have still gone unanswered.

"We're here to show our love and support for the show," she said. "If it got canceled and we didn't take a stand, then we didn't do all we could."

Marie Robertson, co-owner of Dancearts of Columbia, has been a sponsor as well as a monthly guest on "Pepper and Friends" for close to 25 years. If the decision for its cancellation stands, Robertson said that she will pull her sponsorship from KOMU.

"Their motto is 'KOMU cares,' but it doesn't seem like it does," she said. "Without the show, there is no community spirit."
One of the protest's organizers, Mary Hussmann, led the group inside Jesse Hall to Deaton's office for a chance to speak to him in person. Although Deaton was unavailable due to a meeting, Hussmann did not hesitate to make the crowd's purpose known to an audience of Deaton's administrative assistants, who said they would relay her message.

"We are asking for a reprieve and we are asking Chancellor Deaton to use the authority we know he has to speak to Marty Siddall," she said.

The protest then moved to Jones' office. Jones, who had previously met with Atkinson to discuss the cancellation, reiterated that the decision to cancel the show would not change.

"It was not an easy decision by any means, but it was the best decision we could make," she said.

When asked by several protesters what it would cost to keep the show on air, Jones said the program had long-term economic issues and could not be saved by a one-year donation to cover the deficit.

"Nothing is that different with KOMU that's not happening everywhere else," she said. "It is an issue that everyone is aware of nationally, but also in the broadcast industry."

Among the many voices heard was Duane Burghard, Chairman of the Board of Directors for The MacXprts Network and advertiser for KOMU 8. After asking Jones several questions regarding the economic status of "Pepper and Friends," Burghard said that he was closer to receiving what he sees as the real reasons behind the cancellation.

"People will go on and Paul and James will go on," he said. "But they will go on without a particular program that makes Columbia unique and special."
LETTER: Keeping 'Pepper and Friends' would send responsible statement

By Catherine Parke, Columbia
August 31, 2009 | 1:48 p.m. CDT

I join my voice with many others in recent months who have urged retention of the worthwhile and important local program, "Pepper and Friends," by organizing supportive events, circulating petitions and contacting Marty Siddall, General Manager of KOMU; Brady Deaton, Chancellor of MU; and Jacquelyn Jones, Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services.

The bottom line financial issue of profitability, announced as the key factor in canceling the program, is particularly concerning at this time in our nation's history when we have powerful opportunities all around us to contemplate the profit motive run amok in self-delusion, confusion, exploitation and fraud in corporate America and the financial sector. If there were ever a time to make a strong statement about media responsibility to more than mere profit, now is the time.

Finally and even more importantly, "Pepper and Friends" is not canned and generic programming. It is crucial and unique local programming that focuses informatively, variously, and humanely on community and civic activities and on the web of our individual and collective lives in this region. This valuable program should be retained.