

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** HCC Students  
**FROM:** Dr. Cesar Maldonado, Chancellor  
**DATE:** March 5, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19)

Ref: CM20-012  
File: SM

As part of our mission to help shape your future through high quality and innovative programs and services, I feel it is critical to take a moment to address the current concerns and impact regarding the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Although there are no confirmed cases of the COVID-19 in the Houston area, we want to be vigilant and thoughtful in our approach toward disease prevention and monitoring.

Houston Community College (HCC) is monitoring the emerging outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) carefully. Our decisions and related actions are being made in accordance with recommendations and guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and when appropriate coordinated with local governments and our education partners. The CDC advises that the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low for the general American public, but it recognizes that the virus poses a serious public health threat and asks that we remain vigilant in practicing preventative measures.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19; the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. However, as a reminder, CDC also recommends routine everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.



- It's currently flu and respiratory disease season and CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

Even though CDC is providing advice on international travel through its alert protocol, the spread of the virus remains dynamic, therefore **HCC has suspended all school-based international travel until further notice**. We are directing students and employees to the CDC web site, <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>, for more detailed guidance.

**Our primary concern is for the well-being of our students, faculty, staff and community.** We will continue to prepare for the possible impact of COVID-19, and also continue to monitor recommendations from the CDC and from other government agencies. We recognize and appreciate the uncertainty and concern felt in the community and thank you for your dedication to health and wellness. For more information, please visit <https://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/communicable-diseases>. We will continue to follow our communication protocols to keep you informed and empowered.