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SUMMER09 Boston University

Five more swine flu cases reported

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Over the weekend, four additional Amherst College students tested positive for Type A influenza and one Mount Holyoke College student contracted a flu-like illness causing all five students to be isolated on their respective campuses.

With 13 at Amherst, and one at both Mount Holyoke and Smith colleges, 15 Five College students have been isolated out of precaution for flu-like symptoms, which could be swine flu. None of the cases have been confirmed as testing positive for H1N1 (commonly known as swine flu) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), though two at Amherst were identified as probable by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

The Mount Holyoke student does not appear to have any connection to the cases at Amherst, but she has been isolated in a self-contained apartment adjacent to the college's campus, said a statement released Tuesday from the school's director of Health Services Karen Engell.

Despite Amherst College's total reaching 13 possible swine flu cases, the school's director of Health Services Warren H. Morgan said in a statement released Monday afternoon that the level of influenza activity on campus had remained stable and none of the cases had been severe.

Six of the previously quarantined Amherst students were released today as the seven-day isolation period ended and the students had recovered. One of those released spent eight days in isolation instead of seven because they were one of two students who had been considered probable for swine flu by the MDPH.

The University of Massachusetts and Hampshire College have not had any suspected swine flu cases.

Monday evening the MDPH released a statement confirming 28 additional swine flu cases in the state bringing the total to 34.

Among the newly confirmed cases, were two Hampshire County residents, ages 19 and 20. Whether the two Hampshire County cases were the same ones being monitored at Amherst, Smith or Mount Holyoke could not be confirmed by the MDPH because of patient confidentiality, said Jennifer Manley, the department's spokeswoman.

The two confirmed swine flu cases in Hampshire County are the first in western Massachusetts.

The increase in the number of confirmed cases is the result of confirmatory testing now being done at the William A. Hinton State Laboratory Institute in Boston. Previously, testing of all suspect cases was performed at the CDC in Atlanta, Ga., which resulted in a backlog of samples for testing.

Each of the new cases is expected to fully recover and none of the cases are hospitalized, the MDPH statement said.

According to the CDC's website, 1,085 cases of swine flu have been confirmed in 21 countries and killed 25 people, including one death out of 286 cases in the United States across 36 states as of Monday.

Symptoms of swine flu can include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

However, "in many cases 'flu-like' symptoms are being confused by students with seasonal allergy symptoms: running nose, scratchy throat, no fever," Engell said.

Basic prevention measures include using soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer often to clean hands, coughing or sneezing into a tissue, not

sneezing into hands, disposing of used tissues, and keeping hands away from eyes, nose and mouth to reduce spreading germs. Those who experience symptoms are advised to stay home from school or work, and limit contact with others.

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