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**CUAabroad Statement on the H1N1 Virus, September 24, 2009**

The H1N1 virus, commonly known as the swine flu, has been in the news since April 2009 and the outbreak of cases continues to grow worldwide. Because this influenza virus is easily spread, Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization raised the WHO's pandemic alert level from phase 5 to phase 6. The change occurred because the scientific criteria for an influenza pandemic has been met, based on the spread of H1N1 influenza A to many countries around the world.

According to the WHO, the overall severity of the pandemic is moderate: most individuals recover from the infection without the need for hospitalization. Overall levels of serious illness appear similar to seasonal influenza, and hospitals and health care systems have been able to accommodate people seeking care. The WHO continues to recommend no restrictions on travel and no border closures.

Federal, state and local governments as well as educational institutions such as CUA are monitoring the news about the virus and are disseminating advice on ways to prevent the spread of the flu and to devise protocols to implement should that become necessary.

***CUAabroad continues to:***

- Provide updated travel and health information and resources to students interested in studying abroad and to faculty and staff who plan to travel abroad.
- Maintain regular contact with affiliated institutions and educational program providers as well as individual students on approved non-CUA programs. It exchanges information with institutional partners and students on an ongoing basis.
- Require and ensure that students obtain adequate health insurance that is valid in the host country and region.
- Provide mandatory emergency evacuation coverage at no additional costs to all program participants as well as faculty and staff on an ongoing basis.
- Advise students to obtain trip cancellation insurance and strongly encourage students to purchase local mobile phones following arrival at the host institution.
- Provide pre-departure orientation materials, meetings, and resources on the web that contain advice on resources regarding health and safety.
- Strongly encourage students to take responsibility for their own health and well being, monitor their health, and avoid behaviors that may increase the possibility of becoming sick.

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