



**\*IMPORTANT\* | COVID-19 Preparedness & Prevention Update**

**This message was sent with High importance. Bulletins Tue 3/3/2020 12:45 PM**

*Sent on behalf of Susan Fila, Teresita Rodriguez, and Michael Tuitasi March 3, 2020*

**To:** SMC Faculty, Staff & Students  
**From:** Susan Fila, Director, Health and Well-Being  
Teresita Rodriguez, Vice President, Enrollment Development  
Michael Tuitasi, Vice President, Student Affairs  
**Re.:** Prevention of & Planning for COVID-19 (**No cases at SMC**)

As reports come in about the spread of **COVID-19** (the “**2019 novel coronavirus**”) in various states across the United States—including, most recently, six fatalities in Washington State and one case in Northern California not connected to travel or exposure from a recent international traveler—we wanted to provide an update on **campus preparedness and prevention**. You can also read our past updates, beginning with a **Jan. 24 memo** [“Coronavirus FAQ and Tips”](#).

First, and most importantly: **Keep Calm & Wash Your Hands Frequently and Thoroughly** (this is also great advice for flu season—conventional flu strains account for a far greater number of deaths than this new viral strain). **The COVID-19 risk in California remains low**. There is currently [one confirmed case](#) in **Los Angeles County**. With the exception of international travel, Santa Monica College continues all regular activities, classes, and events.

### **Preparedness at Santa Monica College**

SMC is preparing for any eventuality and focusing on campus-wide preparedness. The college’s **Emergency Operations Team**—that includes key personnel from departments including SMC Police Department, Academic Affairs, Institutional Communications & Public Information, Information Technology, Facilities & more—conducted a **tabletop drill on Feb. 19** to review internal processes and preparedness in collaboration with representatives from the **City of Santa Monica** and **LA County Department of Public Health**. The college’s leaders monitoring the situation are in continuous touch with local, state, and federal agencies—this includes **weekly conference calls** with the **Department of Public Health**. SMC will follow Public Health’s directives in the event that an outbreak does occur.

The college’s existing **Hazard Mitigations Plan**—that covers pandemic preparedness—has been updated *specifically* to address a possible COVID-19 outbreak. In the meantime, a core planning group is working with Academic Affairs and other key administrative units to solidify a plan for **campus continuity**. The **Academic Affairs** leadership is developing plans for emergency training and other support for faculty in the event that on-ground instruction is temporarily halted.

Our **facilities department & custodial team** is ensuring that surfaces are disinfected and



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cleaned, and that soap and hand sanitizer stations remain filled. Remember that hand washing with soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of *any* infection.

**SMC's Health Services Center** continues to screen all students for recent travel as well as provide basic education. Regular flu shots are being provided. **Student Health Services is open Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Friday 7:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.** and is **located on the ground floor of Cayton**. The Health Service's office phone number is 310-434-4262. You can also view more information on the Health Services Center's services [on its webpage](#).

SMC's **Office of International Education** has also been working actively to ensure that, insofar as possible, students affected by travel restrictions are able to continue their studies via online options until this situation has been resolved. **Both study abroad trips scheduled for this spring have been cancelled, as recommended by the Center for Disease Control & Prevention** advisory on student foreign travel to higher educational institutions (read the advisory: "[Guidance for Student Foreign Travel for Institutions of Higher Education](#)").

### **What \*YOU\* Can Do**

**Students:** Be aware of the risks of travel restrictions/disruptions especially with regard to the upcoming spring break. Flight cancelations, quarantines, and border closures have been implemented by several countries on short notice. SMC strongly recommends postponing nonessential travel outside the U.S. at this time.

**Faculty & Staff:** Please make careful note of the resources and information in this memo. We must work together as a community to educate our students and help keep SMC safe and healthy. There is always the possibility that you may have to work with department & division heads and Human Resources to make contingency plans to offer core services in the event of disruption. **Faculty should follow their regular policy as indicated in their syllabus regarding student absences. All employees should adhere to the leave policies within their pertinent collective bargaining agreements.**

**All SMC Community:** Students or employees returning from international travels are strongly advised to check in with your primary care doctor or SMC Health Services for screening before returning to classes or engaging in any college/community-oriented activity.

Watch this LA County Public Health Video "[The Facts About the Coronavirus](#)." The Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has an excellent guide on what you can do to prepare your household prepared. Read the guide "[Interim Guidance: Get Your Household Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)". All of us can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 by remembering to:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.



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- 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 the 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.
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### **Important Resources**

**211 LA County:** 211 LA is the central source for information and referrals for all health and human services in LA County. The 2-1-1 phone line (**dial 2-1-1**) is available 24/7. If you cannot directly dial 2-1-1 or are calling from outside Los Angeles County, call **(800) 339-6993**.

**SMC Police Department/Emergency Preparedness Team's COVID-19 Info & Prevention Guide:** Read "[COVID-10 Resource Guide](#)."

**LA County Department of Public Health:** "[Learn More About Coronavirus](#)."

**California Department of Public Health:** "[Novel Coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\): What You Need to Know](#)."

**Center for Disease Control & Prevention:** "[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Summary](#)."

**World Health Organization:** "[Coronavirus disease advice for the public](#)" | Also: "[Coronavirus](#)."

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Please be assured that the college's leadership cares deeply about the safety and well-being of the SMC community. You can expect updates at critical moments via your SMC email (so please check it regularly) and by visiting the [consolidated COVID-19 webpage](#).

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