March 14, 2016

Dear RMU Students,

Welcome back to campus. I hope that you had an enjoyable and relaxing spring break. I’m sharing the following information so we can all stay well for the remainder of the spring semester.

Robert Morris University is aware that a number of college campuses around the country, including a few in Pennsylvania, have recently experienced outbreaks of the Norovirus, a common cold-weather infection. The Norovirus is often referred to as the “stomach flu” or gastroenteritis. This type of virus is responsible for more than 90 percent of intestinal illnesses and occurs more frequently during the winter months. It is important to note that, at this time, RMU does not have any reported cases of the Norovirus on campus or among the members of our community. We need your help to keep our campus community healthy.

The best ways to prevent yourself from being infected by the Norovirus, and to stop the spread of infection if you are ill, are fairly simple:

- Practice proper hand hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and hot water often and use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before consuming them.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid sharing personal items with other individuals.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

If you experience the typical symptoms of the Norovirus including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramping, or low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness, you must immediately contact the Office of Student Health Services at 412-397-6221. Student Health Services is open Monday - Thursday from 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Friday until 5 p.m. Our medical staff will advise you of your treatment options. After hours and during weekends, resident students should contact the Office of Residence Life at 412-397-3291. Roommates of ill students, who have an underlying medical condition or concerns for their own well-being, should contact the Residence Life Office for assistance.

The Norovirus is highly contagious and can be spread for up to three days after recovery. If you have a suspected case of the Norovirus we strongly encourage you to return home to recuperate. It is recommended that you have someone drive you home or ask a family member to come and pick you up. If you live on campus and cannot travel home, you should call Student Health Services or Residence Life at the telephone numbers listed above for further assistance. If you have Norovirus symptoms, you should not attend classes. You should contact professors by email or phone as soon as possible to alert them to the situation and explore ways to make up work or view course materials online. Since most students with gastroenteritis will not be seen by a physician, a physician’s excuse for absences of typical duration will not be expected.
The university will monitor any reported cases of the Norovirus at RMU. If the need should arise, we may take additional steps to prevent the spread of the virus on campus. Thank you for helping us protect the health and safety of our campus community.

Sincerely,

John Michalenko

Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students