

How Response Protocols Impact Them

If your institution has resident assistants or other student leaders working on the frontlines with students, you'll need to consider how your response protocols to issues—like swine flu—impact their jobs.

Some questions to ask yourself as you prepare include:

- Do you have specific procedures in place for student staff involvement? If so where are they located? If not, what does that mean?
- At what point and in what regard are student staff members notified to assist?
- What would happen if a student leader said that he/she was uncomfortable assisting in an outbreak scenario (i.e. because she was pregnant, because he was afraid of the health consequences, etc.)?
- Are any of your student staff exempt from certain vaccinations?
- What plans do you have in place if these student staff members need to be excluded from campus throughout the duration of a particular outbreak?
- What communication strategies are in place for staying in contact with student staff daily during an outbreak scenario?
- How would you help student staff handle the emotional aspects of serving in their role during an outbreak?
- What would you put in place to support these student staffers after an outbreak scenario was wrapped up?

Ask Their Opinions!

Student staff members are often the most savvy when it comes to communicating with students. They know their communities best. So, tap into their expertise when it comes to things like:

- Disseminating accurate information via Facebook
- Twittering about the current situation
- Specific community needs, like their need to discuss issues face-to-face
- Fears and worries that may be arising

Student staff can help *formulate* an effective response, not just implement it.