

Resurgence Plan Phased Approach

Summary – 9/2/20

Level of risk of transmission is associated with the likelihood of viral spread or outbreak. Northwestern has created plans for potential operational changes across the organization based on different phases comprised of four levels of alerts and considerations. These levels and considerations may be external or internal to Northwestern and will be continuously monitored to guide Northwestern's response in an appropriate and timely way should a virus resurgence occur. In addition to monitoring, Northwestern has developed a list of strategies, shaped by Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommendations (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/iherecs.pdf>), to consider implementing depending on the risk level of transmission on campus or in our surrounding community.

Although we believe institutes of higher education differ greatly from K–12, we will be monitoring the number of infections and K–12 indicators referenced in each phase. This data can be found in COVID-19 Weekly Report (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/stats/index.html) “Weekly Case Rate by County of Residence” and “Weekly Percent of Tests Positive By County of Residence” slides. Due to our close proximity to both Ramsey County and Hennepin County, we will monitor both areas for active cases over 7- and 14-day rolling periods. Data for K–12 Schools: 14-day COVID-19 Case Rate by County (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/stats/wschooll.pdf)

Northwestern has formed a Resurgence Analysis Team that will review considerations under the categories of health and well-being and operational continuity on an ongoing basis. Northwestern will base decisions on data and objective criteria; however, each case or cluster of cases, will be reviewed independently for unique characteristics. No single metric or criteria will be considered in isolation; rather, a broad overview of the situation will be required. We will take into account internal and external factors that affect our community. Northwestern's Resurgence Analysis Team will have access to daily measures of the existence of the virus on campus and will offer recommendations to the P5 Team for mitigating strategies or changing indicator phases. The P5 Team is cross-functional team of key leaders from across the organization charged with providing strategic direction in addressing plans, pathways, procedures, price, and policies in response to COVID-19.

Once a review of data and other criteria indicates the need for increased mitigation efforts, Northwestern will move from the current phase of mitigation strategies to the next phase (e.g., green to yellow). Northwestern will implement mitigation strategies in the new phase and monitor for improvement over a 14-day window. If improvement occurs, allowing for a step-down of phases (e.g., yellow to green), mitigation strategies will be maintained as determined feasible. The Senior Leadership Team will receive recommendations from the P5 Team and be responsible for any changes to the phase level of the institution.

Internal Community Considerations

Our internal considerations surrounding the rapidly changing landscape of COVID-19 are not limited to statistics. Although important data for review, a statistical report does not consider all the relevant issues and nuances affecting our community's health, well-being, and operational continuity. Internal community considerations listed below will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by Northwestern leadership teams and used in the decision-making process as the academic year continues.

Health & Well-being:

- Upward trajectory of Positive Case Number (asymptomatic and symptomatic) of self-reported or MDH notifications
- Cluster identification vs. individual cases
- Health Services capacity (includes Health Services staff incapacity due to illness)
- Testing or tracing capacity
- Mitigation method effectiveness or failure
- Upward trajectory in Influenza-like illness (ILI) within a 14-day period over base
- Compromised ability to offer education and services (department illnesses)
- Increasing cases of community transmission with no known source in student population
- Student or employee death(s) as the result of COVID-19

Operational Continuity:

- Isolation/Quarantine capacity on campus or at local hotels
- Degradation of containment capabilities
- Shortage of PPE for critical staff areas (Health Services, Facilities, Public Safety)
- Segment % of Population Inactive (faculty, staff, or students)
 - Disruption to critical operation areas
 - Inability to continue accounting functions (payroll)
 - Inability to maintain safe/clean environment
 - Residence hall outbreak
- Timing of resurgence within the semester
- Parent cooperation with students moving home for isolation/quarantine
- Bon-Appetit outbreak (inability to provide food service)
- Non-compliance with mitigation methods by students or employees

External Community/Regional Considerations

As a university, we do not operate independently. Rather, we are subset within a community that is interconnected. As our response team, representing a broad base of campus partners, makes decisions about the university as a whole, external factors will be considered and are influential in determining outcomes.

Health & Well-being:

- Upward trajectory of External Positive Case % over 14-day period
- Regional hospitals unable to treat all patients; bed capacity on overload
- Upward trajectory of ILI within a 14-day period
- MDH support capacity diminished

- Off-campus cluster or isolated source (jobs, activities, events, etc.); unable to control source

Operational Continuity:

- Action by the Governor, MDH, or other public officials; changing modality of courses or gathering sizes
- Limited capacity of area hotels to quarantine
- Trends among other institutions within our area and CCCU
- External media coverage (public pressure from being under a microscope)
- Interruption of product or service delivery for key operational areas (cleaning supplies, PPE, repair or maintenance)
- Diminished local first-responder capacity

Four Phases of Indicators

Four phases of indicators will be monitored with increased mitigation strategies at each phase. The Resurgence Analysis Team will regularly monitor metrics to identify needs for increased mitigation measures and awareness.

Each phase is progressive and stacks upon the previous phase. Movement can occur from a lower to a higher phase, indicating increased mitigation is necessary, and reverse from a higher to a lower phase, indicating that mitigation has been successful.

Green (Phase 1)—Indicators for low transmission levels

Transmission levels seen as manageable by University of Northwestern

- Cases of COVID-19 on the campus are manageable by the Northwestern faculty and staff
- Contacts can be identified at the time of case interview by Northwestern and MDH
- Review of total isolation and quarantine rooms required
- Total number of positive cases of students and employees on campus within the past 7 days
- All (or majority) of courses are being offered and delivered as scheduled
- K–12 indicators show less than 10 per 10,000 cases over a 14-day period in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties.

Yellow (Phase 2)—Indicators for medium transmission levels

Transmission levels are beginning to tax University of Northwestern’s resources

If mitigation efforts in Phase 1 have not proven successful over a 14 day period, strongly consider implementing mitigation efforts suggested in Phase 2 action items below.

- Number of positive cases reported are increasing over a 14-day period in Hennepin and Ramsey counties
- Cases reported on campus show upward trajectory over a 14-day period
 - Consider if cases involve mostly on-campus housing or commuter students
 - Consider which segment of employees and/or operations are affected
 - Consider if case sources are clusters or not linked to one another
- A low % of campus cases have unknown links to another case over a 7-day period.
- Isolation and quarantine beds are filling, but are contained on campus
- Routine testing capacity (whether through Health Services, contracted labs, or other sources) is starting to be a concern, and regular routes of testing are being depleted, or tests are taking longer than 24 to 48 hours to result
- Supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) is available for the direct contact or essential campus positions, but risk of short supply is rising
- Number of courses being impacted is increasing (change in delivery or change in schedule)
- Other internal metrics are showing concerning signs, such as increased absenteeism among faculty or staff due to anxiety, quarantine, or isolation
- K–12 indicators show that there are 10-30 cases per 10,000 over a 14-day period in Hennepin or Ramsey Counties

Orange (Phase 3)—Indicators for high transmission levels

Transmission levels have further depleted University of Northwestern's resources

Increased case activity may be occurring on campus, in the community, or both. If mitigation efforts in Phases 1 and 2 have not proven successful over a 14-day period, strongly consider implementing mitigation efforts suggested in Phase 3.

- Number of infections continue to increase over the 14-day period after Phase 2 mitigation efforts have been put into place
- Cases reported on campus continue to show upward trajectory over a 14-day period
 - Consider where spread is occurring when using this indicator (mostly on-campus housing or commuter students?)
 - Consider which segment of employees and/or operations are affected
 - Consider if case sources are clusters or not linked to one another
- Isolation and quarantine beds are full and needs are not contained on campus
- Select groups of students and employees are intentionally not complying with public health mitigation recommendations, such as masking, social distancing, and avoiding social gatherings
- Increasing number of courses are impacted and disrupted—continuity based on original modalities and schedule is significantly challenged
- Other internal and external metrics of capacity and staffing suggest a more aggressive approach to mitigation, with metrics including but not limited to the following:
 - Local hospitalizations nearing capacity
 - Trends in other higher education institutions within our area
 - Limited ability for students to isolate or quarantine off campus
- K–12 indicators show that there are more than 30 cases per 10,000 over a 14-day period in Hennepin and Ramsey counties

Red (Phase 4)—Sustained level of high transmission

Transmission levels have seriously depleted or exhausted University of Northwestern resources

The above mitigation efforts do not show an improvement over a 14-day period after Phase 3 has been put in place. The majority of metrics reviewed show upward trajectory with no impact by mitigation efforts.

Mitigation Strategies in Response to Phases

Green (Phase 1)—Low level of transmission

Transmission levels are not taxing Northwestern's resources

General recommendations:

- Ensure that Information Technology systems can support student learning, faculty teaching, and staff working remotely as needed
- Ensure that all isolation and quarantine services are addressing the needs of the students

Leadership and communication:

- Create dashboard to communicate selected metrics and information about on-campus COVID-19 positive or active cases to Northwestern community
- Activate a communications plan for all faculty, staff, and students about what behaviors are expected to help mitigate further spread of the virus
- Use Northwestern's main communications channels (theROCK, email, website, and/or social media) to disseminate as broadly as possible
- Update and institute recommended MDH protocols for social distancing where feasible
- Stand ready to provide training for use of education and communication platforms
- Assign leader(s) to each of the following to ensure clear communication and direction:
 - Enforcement of policies, including social distancing, masking, and any code of conduct policies that may be applicable at a given institution relating to willful violations
 - Enforcement of policies: Supervisor/HR for employees, Student Life/Academic Achievement for students
 - Community Expectations (employees/students) and Return-to-Campus
 - Team leads or groups to reinforce values of ethical and moral responsibility for self and others in the institutional community
 - Student Life— Declaration of COVID-19 Christian Community
 - Liaisons with MDH and other local officials as needed
 - Director of COVID Operations and Director of Health Services

Academic programming:

- Review and shape classroom social distancing standards and reduce class sizes in accordance with MDH IHE guidelines where feasible
- Remove tables and chairs in accordance with ADA standards and in keeping with any expressed accessibility issues
- Consider flexible delivery options and staggered scheduling of courses
- Ensure training and readiness for the use of education and communication platforms
- Re-examine available resources to support a wide range of teaching strategies and phases (e.g., hybrid and blended learning, fully online, in-person with distancing, students connecting virtually, faculty teaching remotely)
- Ensure faculty have plans created to pivot to virtual teaching and shift to higher mitigation phases if needed

- Encourage virtual or remote advising and office hours
- Develop institutional contingency plans in case primary tools (LMS, Zoom, etc.) are not functioning

Residence life and dining:

- Review and shape residence life and dining standards in accordance with MDH IHE guidelines where feasible
- Develop a communications plan for all students (on- and off-campus) that provides:
 - A list of available resources
 - Health Services hours and locations
 - MDH testing locations
 - Protocols for household living
 - Transportation protocols and options
- Initiate relationship and contract with local hotels or other establishments for quarantine or isolation needs

Employee Support Services

- Link to FAQs—Ensure there is a designated Human Resources contact list for employees to call with questions or concerns. Employees can contact HRBenefits@unwsp.edu
- Communicate Northwestern’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) options

Campus security:

- Communicate safety plans to campus communities (regardless of the level of surge severity, regular communications are encouraged with all stakeholders that point to posted information about plans and solicit feedback)
- Reassess the use of facilities for events and rentals using recommended guidelines from local, state, federal governments, and university or department policies and procedures

Yellow (Phase 2)—Medium level of transmission

Transmission levels are taxing campus resources

All prior recommendations apply with the following additional recommendations. Review all managed outbreak actions and then proceed.

General recommendations:

- Identify any failed mitigation strategies
- Reinforce and communicate Health & Well-being expectations
 - Target specific mitigation strategies as needed
 - Identify specific segments of population as needed

- Cancel events and activities that bring groups of students together when social distancing cannot be easily maintained; consider limiting social and activity gatherings to 10 indoors and 25 outdoors
- Encourage limited non-essential off-campus activities for students
- Reach out to Local Public Health (LPH) and MDH for testing support if needed
- Reach out to LPH, regional health care organizations, and MDH for PPE support if needed
- Health Services, Facilities, and Purchasing should assess and maintain proper inventories of critical supplies (e.g., cleaning and disinfectant agents, hand sanitizers, PPE-related supplies)

Screening for symptoms and testing:

- Find innovative ways to remind students and employees to look for COVID-19 symptoms
 - Consider utilization of an app to track symptoms
 - Reinforce Alert level system: Phase 1—Low Risk; Phase 2—Moderate Risk; Phase 3—High Risk
- Promote the importance of self-screening; refresh signage
- In collaboration with MDH or LPH, consider broad testing for areas where clusters exist on campus (dorms, activities, etc.)
- Seek legal counsel on ability to require mass testing if considered
- Verify Health Services capability to continue testing, or seek MDH assistance if needed
 - If testing students and employees, verify capacity to continue employee testing
 - Prioritize student testing on campus

Leadership and communication:

- Provide messaging via theROCK, social media, and email to campus constituents with concerns and needs to better adhere to guidelines as well as restrictions as noted above
- Consider extra communication and precautions for people who are considered high risk for severe illness
- Ensure all communications with stakeholders (students, staff, faculty, and surrounding community) are current and the messages conveyed are uniformly delivered to ensure that everyone is informed
- Adjust operations in Human Resources, Facilities, Finance, Academics, etc., to account for shifts in services and demand with increased number of cases
- Communicate and reiterate recommendations for staff, faculty, and students who feel sick to stay home

Academic programming:

- Professors should be prepared to continue teaching students who are in isolation or quarantine and ensure academic continuity for students at any point in the semester
- Fully leverage lecture capture technology
- Modify courses where students are not able to social distance
 - Example: for lab classes, find ways to reduce the need for activities that require partners
- Consider moving larger section sizes (> 25) to virtual
- Confirm readiness to pivot to virtual instruction
- Evaluate ability and viability of maintaining external partnerships

Residence life and dining:

- Increase to-go options on campus, and consider touchless delivery or pick up options for dining services
- Ensure that social distancing expectations can be strictly enforced in dining rooms
 - In some cases, leaving dining open but restricting flow and seating will be more effective than students going elsewhere to gather
- Determine external capacity and finalize contract with local hotels or other establishments for isolation or quarantine needs
- Work with MDH or LPH to consider initiating options for extra capacity for isolation and quarantine if needed. Decisions to change isolation and quarantine capacity should be guided by local, state, and federal recommended guidelines.

Athletics and recreational programs:

- Consider canceling or delaying athletic and recreational events, including practices, scrimmages and/or games that cannot maintain social distancing standards
- Consider closure of athletic equipment rooms

Campus operations and maintenance:

- Consider increased efforts for disinfecting areas of use and high touch areas
- Consider modifying or limiting hours of operation (especially for areas where students tend to gather or cluster)
- Close campus to outside guests (e.g., walkers, pet walkers, island/beach visitors, and families other than pick-up/drop-off)
- Continue to monitor and enforce recommended guidelines for social distancing
- Ensure that enforcement strictly adheres to policies and procedures

Community engagement and support:

- Communicate safety plans to campus communities; regardless of the level of surge severity, regular communications to all stakeholders that point to available information about plans and solicit feedback are encouraged

Use of facilities, events, and rentals:

- Consider canceling or reducing all third-party events and rentals
- Consider canceling face-to-face Academy of Music lessons

Orange (Phase 3)—High level of transmission

Transmission levels have seriously depleted institutional resources. All prior recommendations apply with these additions:

General recommendations:

- Cancel all extracurricular activities

- Reach out to LPH and MDH for testing support
- Reach out to LPH and MDH for PPE support
- Monitor and maintain proper inventories of critical supplies (e.g., cleaning and disinfectant agents, hand sanitizers, PPE related supplies)
- Review trajectories, clusters, and project additional spread if possible.
- Determine timeline in conjunction with review of natural break in courses such as quad or semester
- Increase enforcement of mitigating protocols (e.g., face coverings, distancing, etc.)

Leadership and communication:

- Ensure regular, weekly update on status of situation
- Review plans and timing to cease in-person classes if Phase 4 must be activated
- Plan social media outreach, monitoring, and response

Academic programming

- Move classes that cannot adhere to six-foot social distancing to hybrid or virtual
- Consider moving courses in rooms/buildings with restrictive airflow or limited HVAC capabilities to alternative locations or virtual
- Allow faculty to voluntarily move courses to virtual if deemed viable for subject matter
- Consider two weeks of primarily virtual instruction

Residence life and dining:

- Restrict all outside access to dorms and residence halls
- Consider allowing some students to move home to virtual learning and reduce number of students to one person per room in a residential facility
- Continue to promote grab-and-go options, touchless delivery, or pick-up for dining
- Keep dining halls open so students do not gather elsewhere
 - Ensure social distancing of six feet or greater in all seating arrangements

Student support services:

- Move all remaining student support services to virtual/digital format
- Consider how to support students who already experience racial disparities; COVID-19 is exacerbating those disparities
- Consider how to support international students who may not be able to return home

Employee support services:

- Share EAP contacts, mental health services, and retirement planning services

Information technology:

- Ensure access to loanable computers, including desktops, laptops, tablets, Chromebooks, etc.
- Ensure remote access to computer labs
- Check availability of Wi-Fi hotspots
- Have local ISP providers for student access
- Make troubleshooting guides available for student internet connectivity issues

- Create and/or review a support plan for issues that may occur as faculty and staff work from home

Athletics and recreational programs:

- Move to individual development only for all athletes if it can be completed with social distancing
- Close athletic equipment and weight rooms, or limit to one person at a time

Campus operations and maintenance:

- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting on campus
- Increase use of air purifiers/ionizers
- Close areas of high congestion: Campus Store to curbside or back-door pick-up only; Mail Center by appointment only; mail box check times assigned, etc.

Campus security:

- Ensure access to campus is restricted to essential personnel
- Lock and secure access points; guard shack occupied 24/7 or card scan arm installed
- Patrol access points and interior facilities
- Consider a modified plan for transportation/moving out of dorms such as a staggered approach with times, and logistics of how vehicles/parents, etc., are allowed to come to campus to move students home if that becomes necessary

Community engagement and support:

- Communicate full pandemic plan and procedures in place
- Consider if and how university facilities and other resources could be made available for pandemic response actions

Third-party use of facilities, events, and rentals:

- Cancel all third-party events and refund deposits to the extent possible

Plan for next phase if numbers do not decrease:

- Plan to temporarily empty or reduce the number of residents in residence halls with consideration of the following:
 - Student class standing (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
 - Student majors and courses (with potential requirement to complete place-based activities)
 - Student residence distance from campus
- Plan for housing for students who do not have another place to live
 - International students
 - Out-of-state students
 - Students with unsafe domestic situations
 - Vulnerable individuals at home - Quarantine first, then return home.

Red (Phase 4)—Sustained and uncontrolled level of high transmission

Transmission levels have exhausted institutional resources

The above mitigation efforts have not resulted in an improvement over a two- to three-week period after Phase 3 has been put in place. Campus should move to online-only until the next semester or an alternative time identified.