Dear Wesleyan Families,

This public health update was sent to members of the campus community yesterday. It will be posted in the Recent Correspondence section of the Parents and Families website for future reference.

To the Wesleyan community,

A collection of viruses that circulate in the fall and winter—the common cold, rhinosinusitis, and viral bronchitis—are making their seasonal return to campus. In addition to the more common respiratory symptoms, some manifestations can be gastrointestinal, including vomiting and diarrhea.

For the most part, these infections do not cause significant health problems, particularly in the college-age population. Our immune system knows exactly what to do to fight them successfully, and with some good old-fashioned self-care, recovery can be made simple.

**Self-care advice**

- **Rest:** Your body is fighting an illness, in addition to all the other things it does. This is tiring. Try to get a minimum of eight to nine hours of sleep at night.

- **Hydrate:** Your body needs additional fluid to fight infections (Dehydration can happen rather quickly). Water is the preferred option, but one may also drink juices, sports drinks, decaffeinated tea, and clear broth. Avoid caffeine and alcohol. The best way to tell if you are adequately hydrated is to observe your urine output. If you are urinating a normal or increased amount and your urine is clear or light yellow, you are keeping up with hydration. If your urine output is decreased and/or dark yellow/orange, increase your fluid intake. Fluids lost with vomiting, diarrhea, and fever necessitates more hydration. In addition to the loss of fluids, you may also lose your appetite. As your body begins to recover, your appetite will return to normal.

- **Symptom relief:** Over-the-counter medications will not accelerate recovery but may make you feel better while you are recovering. Tylenol (Acetaminophen/Paracetamol), Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or Naprosyn (Aleve) decreases pain and fever as well as relieves inflammation. They can cause stomach upset so it may be helpful to take the medication with food.
Decongestants/Mucolytics may relieve sinus congestion. Saltwater nasal spray can be very effective to thin out thick nasal secretions. Throat lozenges, cough drops, or mixture of a quarter of a teaspoon of plain table salt in 4–8 oz of water for a throat gargle can soothe a painful throat.

- **Listen to your body:** If you feel bad or have a fever (t > 100.4 degrees F or 38 degrees C) and cannot attend class or work, stay home. Make sure you have a thermometer. It is important to know if you have a fever and your temperature.

Many of these viral illnesses can be cared for most efficiently in your residence or at home. However, if you do have concerning symptoms, which include a fever over 103, trouble breathing, chest or abdominal pain, or lightheadedness, among others, students should contact the Davison Health Center and faculty and staff should consult with their medical care provider. The Health Center is open Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and most Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. After hours, I or Dr. Daponte are on call and can be reached by calling (860) 685-2470. In an emergency, please call Public Safety to be transported to Middlesex Hospital Emergency Department.

The Health Center does not routinely give medical notes to students who are only seen for the day with self-limiting conditions and do not need to have extended medical care or treatment. In those cases, please communicate directly with your professors.

Be kind to yourselves,

Dr. Tom McLarney
Medical Director