AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

MEMORANDUM
January 18, 2013

TO: AU Community

FROM: Patricia Kelshian, Assistant Vice President, Risk Management & Safety Services
Daniel Bruey, Director, Student Health Center

SUBJECT: Protect Yourself from Colds and Flu

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the 2012-2013 influenza season started in December, earlier than usual, and activity remains high in the United States.

Although American University has not seen a notable number of cases to date, we want to provide you with prevention tips and information. As we head into the spring semester, we anticipate students and employees at the university may become affected by influenza, or other respiratory illnesses.

AU is actively tracking cases of flu in our campus community, and will continue to work cooperatively with local and federal health departments and other regional agencies to monitor this year's flu season. Typical flu seasons last until April.

To protect yourself and others against the spread of germs, health officials recommend that you take these simple but important steps:

Avoid the flu!

- **Get your flu vaccine. Flu vaccines are available for all students, faculty, and staff at the Student Health Center for FREE! Stop in between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm. No appointment necessary. Unfortunately, we are not able to administer the vaccine to spouses or families.**

- **Wash your hands often**. Frequent hand washing helps protect you. The alcohol in sanitizer gels and wipes helps kill cold and flu viruses you pick up from any surface you touch. Plain soap works just as well as antibacterial soap.

- **Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth**. Germs can enter your body this way, or be spread from your hands to others.

- **Cover your sneeze or cough**. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve to trap the germs. If you cough into your hands, wash them as soon as you can. Use disposable tissues and throw them away immediately after each use.

- **Try to avoid close contact with those who have symptoms of flu**.

If you get sick, keep it from spreading!

- **Limit your exposure to others**. Stay home and rest.

- **Drink lots of fluids**.

- **Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze**. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

- **Treat your aches and fever**. Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (such as Advil) can help provide relief. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label, especially for children. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without using fever-reducing medicine. Viruses–not bacteria–cause colds, flu, and chest colds. Antibiotics don't kill viruses, so they don't work for colds or flu.

We ask people experiencing cold and/or flu-like symptoms to stay home, contact their physician, and alert their supervisor (employees) or the Student Health Center (students) of their illness. The flu is contagious one to two days before and four to five days after symptoms start.

Supervisors who are notified that an employee is out sick with flu-like symptoms are asked to contact their unit's HR liaison. HR liaisons, if your unit has 30 percent or more of their staff with symptoms, please contact Carol Edwards in Human Resources so that we can track cases and follow protocols. Please remember that a person's medical condition must be treated as a confidential matter.

We will keep you informed as more information becomes available.