

Local campuses are on alert due to coronavirus

UConn and Eastern are keeping eye on outbreak

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— The University of Connecticut and Eastern Connecticut State University communities are on alert following the outbreak of coronavirus in China, though there have not been any confirmed cases in the state.

The outbreak began in Wuhan City, China, and is now an international health crisis, with several confirmed cases reported throughout the United States,

“At the current time, we consider Eastern to be at very low risk of having a member of the campus community contract the coronavirus,” ECSU Director of University Relations Edward Osborn said in a statement this morning.

He said, under ECSU Office of Health Services protocol, detailed travel information will be obtained for any patient being evaluated with fever/acute respiratory symptoms.

Osborn said criteria from the Centers for Disease Con-



University of Connecticut junior Maggie Cheung of Uncasville said she is scared and worried about how fast coronavirus is spreading. Michelle Firestone | Staff

trol and Prevention are being used for “patients under investigation” in connection with coronavirus.

That criteria is if a patient exhibits a fever and lower respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) and has traveled from Wuhan City, China, in the last 14 days before symptom onset or has exhibited fever or lower respiratory symptoms and has been in close contact

with a laboratory-certified coronavirus within the last 14 days prior to symptom onset.

According to the CDC, coronaviruses are a large family of viruses common in many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats and bats.

A statement was issued about the situation on the UConn Student Health and Wellness webpage.

“Our health-care providers are screening all of our patients according to CDC guidelines,” the webpage states. “At present, there has been no person diagnosed with novel coronavirus in the state of Connecticut, including at UConn.”

UConn spokesperson Stephanie Reitz said there are about 2,700 UConn students from China, including

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graduate and undergraduate students, across all UConn campuses.

“We’ll be working with local health departments and the state health department,” she said.

Two people were under investigation for possible coronavirus in Connecticut — a student at Wesleyan University in Middletown and a New Haven County resident.

“The state is closely monitoring reported cases and remaining cautious on behalf of the public,” Gov. Ned Lamont said in a press release Monday.

“We want to make sure that we are doing everything we can to provide updated information on these developments to the people of our state. We ask that the public not panic but take possible symptoms seriously and consult a health care professional.”

According to Lamont’s office, the Wesleyan student tested negative for coronavirus and, as of Monday, the New Haven County person was still being tested.

Both students tested positive for influenza type A, mostly likely caused by the flu, and were in isolation as a precaution, according to the press release.

Symptoms of coronavirus include runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever and a general feeling of being unwell.

There isn’t a vaccine or specific treatment for the infection available, but preventative actions can stop the spread of coronavirus and other respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often



University of Connecticut sophomore Fiona Casey of New Fairfield spoke about the coronavirus outbreak while taking a break from her studies at the UConn Student Union Monday afternoon. Michelle Firestone | Staff

with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be used if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

- If you are sick, stay home.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash when finished with it.

- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces.

UConn students reacted to the situation at the Student Union Monday.

“I’m not very nervous about it just because I’ve never had

the flu before,” said UConn sophomore Fiona Casey, who is from New Fairfield.

She is, however, worried about a friend who lives in China.

Casey said her friend was a UConn student but transferred after the fall semester.

“Last time I talked to her, she didn’t seem nervous about it, but it’s something I should probably ask her about,” she said.

According to the CDC, symptoms of the virus may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

“I’m very scared about it,” said UConn junior Maggie

Cheung, whose parents are from China. “I’m worried.”

She said her parents are not concerned and trust she is taking the proper precautions.

The CDC has recommended people avoid all necessary travel to Wuhan City, China.

Those who may have traveled to Wuhan City or other concerning areas or have come into contact with someone who has traveled to those areas are being advised to call their healthcare provider ahead of time before appearing to a medical provider’s office for treatment.

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