Dear Students:

Since many of you soon will be leaving for Spring Break, I am writing with several important reminders about health and safety.

If you follow the news, you already know the global coronavirus outbreak is a major concern for anyone considering international travel at this time. The virus has spread to areas of the world beyond China with an accelerating and unpredictable trajectory. This threat will likely grow. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced this week that the virus is expected to impact the United States in a more severe way than it has to date.

Traveling abroad – whether for study or leisure – carries a number of potential risks. Even a country not currently experiencing an outbreak could suddenly be declared a high-risk area, resulting in heightened exposure to the virus, difficulty with departure, immigration barriers in returning to the U.S., and even possible restrictions on returning to Grounds. The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to destinations with CDC or State Department Level 3 alerts or higher.

The seasonal flu also is present in many areas. Basic measures remain the best defense against coronavirus, flu, and other communicable diseases:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 30 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Note: The CDC has defined close contact as being less than six feet away from a symptomatic person.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Coronavirus can be a serious illness. Please do not let a lack of health insurance or money keep you from getting necessary healthcare. Please visit your preferred healthcare provider as needed.

Travel Preparation

- The CDC maintains a travel information website for coronavirus (COVID-19).
  - CDC Warning Level 3 is in effect for China, Iran, Italy and South Korea (as of March 2).
  - CDC Alert Level 2 is in effect for Japan (as of March 2).
  - CDS Alert Level 1 is in effect for Hong Kong (as of March 2).
- Be familiar with all aspects of the area you are visiting. The State Department’s website, studentsabroad.state.gov, offers planning tips, including links to local laws.
- Enroll in the State Department’s STEP program and sign up for alerts for your destination(s).

Additional Advice

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is currently requesting help from the public
to identify possible new cases of COVID-19. This guidance has been developed due to community spread in countries outside of China. Public Health is now requesting:

1. People with Symptoms: Anyone with known exposure to a patient who tested positive for COVID-19 or who have returned to Nebraska in the last 14 days from the following countries: mainland China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam (as of the date of this report) and who have fever of at least 100.4 or respiratory symptoms (cough and/or shortness of breath) should stay home and away from others and call their doctor.

2. Travelers without symptoms from mainland China are requested to self-report to the Nebraska public health on-line tracking system and to stay at home and away from others for 14 days. Reports can also be made via phone to NNPHD at 402-375-2200 or 800-375-2260.

3. Travelers without symptoms from South Korea, Iran, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam are requested to self-report via the contact information listed in #2 above.

We know that this is a lot of information, but we want to ensure you have the information needed to make the best decisions for your health and safety. If you have any questions now or during the break, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or other College staff.

Sincerely,
Matthew Thielen