

March 15, 2004

TO: Montana State University-Billings Community

FROM: Dr. Ronald P. Sexton, Chancellor
Mr. Curt Kochner, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

RE: International Travel and Infectious Disease Policy

Montana State University-Billings is becoming more active in global affairs with the expansion of study abroad opportunities and the increase of international students enrolling in programs on our campuses. As we continue to build relationships with global partners, it will be essential that we take all possible precautions to reduce the spread of infectious diseases. The following policy has been developed to provide guidance for working with university related activities that include international travel and the possible exposure to infectious diseases.

International Travel and Infectious Disease Policy

Overview

Montana State University-Billings is an active participant in global affairs with students traveling to foreign countries for Study Abroad experiences and International students coming to Montana State University-Billings to enrich their educational program. A number of health related issues arise as students, faculty and staff travel to and from foreign countries.

During the past few years, there have been a number of incidents of infectious diseases, particularly SARS, spreading around the world via international travelers. The extremely serious nature of this disease has led the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to issue warnings and travel alerts in an effort to halt the spread of SARS and other infectious diseases.

Montana State University-Billings has created an International Travel and Infectious Disease Policy in an effort to clarify how we will interact with public health officials to deal responsibly and effectively with the threats associated with SARS and other infectious diseases.

Public Health Response

Since late March of 2002, the CDC and WHO have diligently tracked the incidents of SARS, and the CDC has provided recommendations on everything from caring for those with the disease to recommendations on travel. Information about travel alerts and travel advisories may be found at the CDC web site at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel_alertadvisory.htm or the WHO site at www.who.int/csr/sars/en. An "alert" indicates a lower level of risk than an "advisory", and an alert implies that the disease, while present, appears to be contained. It is only in cases where a location has a travel "advisory" that there is a public health recommendation that non-essential travel be curtailed.

MSU-Billings Response

MSU-Billings is committed to working with city, county and national resources to inform our community about the risks associated with SARS and other infectious diseases. All existing resources will be utilized to address the risks associated with infectious diseases for travelers going to and/or returning from

foreign countries. The Centers for Disease Control web site at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel_alertadvisory.htm provides current information about SARS and other infectious diseases.

Outgoing Foreign Travel

There is a moratorium on Montana State University-Billings funded or sponsored business or academic related travel by faculty or students to locations that are currently identified by either the CDC or WHO as "travel advisory" sites. Because of the changing nature of travel alert and travel advisory designations, all decisions regarding outgoing travel will be subject to the current information available from the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

Travel requests to "travel advisory" locations may be changed at any time based on updated information issued by the CDC and WHO. Outgoing travel may be cancelled if a destination is identified as a "travel advisory" site.

Outgoing travelers are encouraged to consult the Yellowstone City/County Health Department for information about immunizations that may be available, recommended and/or required for persons traveling to foreign countries.

Incoming Foreign Travel

Faculty, staff or students that are traveling to Billings from a location currently under "travel advisory" status will be referred to the Yellowstone City/County Health Department for consultation regarding their health status and their possible exposure to the infectious disease for which the "travel advisory" has been issued.

MSU-Billings will consult and work with local public health officials to coordinate actions that will be taken when working with University personnel, students or guests that have traveled to areas under a "travel advisory" status.

Response to Possible Infectious Disease Cases

MSU-Billings will follow the directions of public health authorities, principally the Yellowstone City/County Health Department, related to control of an infectious disease.

Additional Resources and Contacts

Yellowstone City/County Health Dept.	406-247-3200 www.ycchd.org
World Health Organization	www.who.int/csr/sars/en
Centers for Disease Control	www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars
MSU-Billings Student Health Center	406-657-2153; FAX 406-657-2145
MSU-Billings International Studies	406-657-1705

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