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Health Advisory

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Health Advisory

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Office of University
Communications

June 19, 2015

Gardner-Webb University Health Advisory

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This week Gardner-Webb University and the Cleveland County Health Department joined forces after a number of visiting campers began experiencing symptoms including diarrhea and vomiting. The health department has recommended that this be treated as the norovirus, and as a precaution to avoid the additional spread of the virus, the University chose to close select facilities throughout the weekend, and advised the camp most impacted by the norovirus to leave campus earlier than originally planned to assist in stopping additional spread.

The university first became aware of the sickness when two campers arrived at Gardner-Webb on Monday experiencing symptoms. On Tuesday, 12 campers were infected, and by Wednesday evening 37 cases were reported. The Cleveland County Health Department was consulted and met with university officials early Thursday morning to offer recommendations.

As of Friday morning, 64 people had reported similar symptoms. Most of those were campers (56), and the additional were Gardner-Webb residential students (5) and staff members (3).

As a precaution, the University cafeteria closed Wednesday for sanitized cleaning, and will remain closed throughout the weekend. Food services officials are ensuring that other dining options are available for campers and students. The swimming pool, the wellness center, and the athletic weight room will also be closed through Monday. Other buildings may be placed on altered schedules as well.

University officials are working to sanitize several other common areas including select residence halls, some classrooms, and other identified spaces. It is expected that all locations should be disinfected by the end of the weekend.

Norovirus symptoms typically last 24-48 hours and the infected can remain contagious for up to 3 days. The virus is spread through surface contact, and close contact with infected individuals. Bathrooms, close quarters, living quarters, and communal areas are the most common places to come in contact with the spread of the virus. GWU is encouraging the university community to be diligent in washing hands frequently in warm, soapy water,

and lathering for at least 15-20 seconds. Hand sanitizers are not recommended as the best course of action to combat the spread of the norovirus. Other symptoms can include nausea, stomach pain, fever, headache and body aches. A person will usually develop symptoms within 12 -48 hours after being exposed.

**Additional notes:*

- The university has contacted the camp directors for the incoming camps to ensure they are aware of the situation.
- This week GWU hosted five separate camps between June 15-19 (692 total campers). Two additional camps begin today but will be using alternate facilities through Monday. There are three camps scheduled to begin Monday.
- The University is asking any staff, faculty or commuter students experiencing symptoms to refrain from returning to campus until they have been symptom free for 72 hours.
- Residential students experiencing symptoms are being asked to remain isolated to their rooms and should utilize a consistent bathroom space. They are also asked to notify university residence life officials once symptoms occur.
- Gardner-Webb currently has 55 residential students for this current summer session.