Dear Faculty Member,

Now that students have returned to campus, I want to take this opportunity to remind you of the University Health Service's policy on giving excuses for missed classes. In keeping with our mission to improve the health of the students and staff of the University, our first concern is always the individual patient we are seeing. We also realize that in some situations we need to be of assistance to University faculty and staff when health issues may be affecting a student's performance. While we often provide oral and/or written instructions to students who need to alter their activities due to illness or injury, it is next to impossible to do this in a credible way after the fact of an illness.

Therefore, we do not provide retroactive excuses for missed classes. Students who are seen at UHS for an illness or injury can ask for documentation that verifies the date of their visit(s) to UHS without mention of the reason for the visit. If the student’s UHS provider determines the student should curtail activities in the coming days or weeks, the provider will give the student written instructions with specific recommendations. Documentation cannot be provided to students who were not seen at UHS for their illness or injury. Students are encouraged to make every effort to resolve health-related absences and issues by talking with you directly.

Be aware that H1N1 influenza is expected to cause many students to miss classes in the coming weeks. Please be flexible in dealing with these students, as some of them will not need to be evaluated at UHS and therefore will not have written excuses from their health care provider. We will be keeping a list of students who have been told to stay in their rooms. We will tell you how to access this list once it is set up, but it won’t necessarily have the names of all students who are unable to attend class due to illness.

We appreciate your understanding and support of this policy. As always, you are encouraged to urge students who are having academic and/or attendance problems to make an appointment to be seen at UHS for evaluation. With the student’s permission, we can discuss the relevant issues with you so that you can make an informed decision about any particular case.

Please feel free to contact me by mail, email (rmanchester@uhs.rochester.edu) or phone if you have any questions or concerns. We also have useful information on the UHS website (www.rochester.edu/uhs).

Sincerely,

Ralph A Manchester, MD, FACP
Director, University Health Service
Associate Professor of Medicine

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