

Varsities not taking chances with new intakes

KUALA LUMPUR: The universities are not taking any chances with the Influenza A(H1N1) pandemic with new students scheduled to register for the 2009/2010 academic session.

They have put in place several measures to prevent local transmission of the A(H1N1) virus among the students and the academic staff.

Universiti Malaya (UM) vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Ghauth Jasmon said the university was monitoring its 27,000 students, including 3,000 international students, and especially those from the high-risk countries such as the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Australia, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand.

In a statement, he said the university would make it compulsory for all new students to complete a health declaration form. It had also set up an H1N1 task force to prepare an action plan.

Ghauth also said the student health clinic and University Malaya Medical Centre were on standby to receive H1N1 cases. Students who had to be quarantined would be sent to the UM International House, UM staff quarters and the 11th residential college.

He said the staff and students had been advised not to travel abroad unless it was necessary to do so. The university would curtail any outdoor activities and gatherings to prevent local transmission of the disease.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) has announced that it would require all new students for the 2009/2010 session to undergo screening for A(H1N1) before registration at their respective residential colleges.

Its head of corporate communications, Abdullah Arshad, said in a statement the screening would be conducted tomorrow and on Sunday at the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Cultural and Arts Centre in the university.