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Health center staff trained in SARS detection

A serious respiratory infection, called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), is spreading quickly around the world. Reports have come in from Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Ireland, Romania, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, the United States and Vietnam, prompting the World Health Organization to issue a global alert for the first time in more than a decade.

Staff at Oakland University's Graham Health Center all have been trained to ensure early detection of a possible case of SARS, said Joanne Talarek, nurse practitioner at GHC.

"Patients calling with suspicious complaints can be screened by phone and directed to an emergency room rather than GHC if they meet all the CDC criteria for a possible case of SARS," Talarek said. "Should we have a patient in the clinic who we strongly suspect is infected with SARS, we will provide that person and all other staff and patients with a mask and escort them to a separate room until transportation to an ER, for further evaluation, can be arranged. These procedures are modeled after our existing TB control procedures."

Talarek said (according to the CDC) the typical profile of a patient presenting with possible SARS is severe respiratory distress, severe cough, fever (over 100.4) and a recent history of travel abroad or close contact with recent travelers. So far, no cases of SARS in Oakland County have been documented.

SUMMARY

Staff at Oakland University's Graham Health Center all have been trained to ensure early detection of a possible case of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

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