On May 2, 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first case of Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in the United States. This case was acquired while the person was working in a healthcare facility in Saudi Arabia. The MERS-CoV outbreak has been centered in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula*, and a record number of cases were reported in April 2014, indicating an increase in transmission. MERS-CoV is a virus similar to the SARS coronavirus and can cause severe morbidity and mortality. In light of these reports, we remind all VU faculty, staff, and students about ways to minimize the spread of this infection if you are travelling to affected regions of the world:

**Travel Precautions:**

Travelers to the affected areas should know that the risk of contracting MERS-CoV remains very low. Faculty and staff going to countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula to provide health care services should practice CDC’s recommendations for infection control of confirmed or suspected cases. Travelers who are going to the area for other reasons are advised to follow standard precautions, such as hand washing and avoiding contact with people who are ill. As with all international business travel, faculty/staff are advised to obtain a pre-travel consultation in the Occupational Health Clinic.

While in the affected area for any reason, monitor your own health closely. Travelers should carry a thermometer and have a plan for accessing medical care if necessary. Following travel to the Arabian Peninsula, monitor your temperature twice a day for 14 days. **If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness within 14 days after returning from an affected area, faculty and staff should contact the Occupational Health Clinic for further evaluation, while students should contact Student Health.**

While the risk of MERS-CoV transmission remains very low in the United States, we must remain vigilant and cautious. For questions or additional information, faculty and staff may contact the Occupational Health Clinic, and students can contact Student Health at 322-2427.

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*Countries in the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring countries: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestinian territories, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen*