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GASTROINTESTINAL OUBREAK ON UNC CAMPUS LINKED TO NOROVIRUS

Orange County, NC (March 4, 2013) – Between the dates of February 27, 2013 and March 1, 2013 approximately 85 UNC-Chapel Hill students sought medical care for nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fever. The Orange County Health Department has been working closely with the University and the State to identify the cause of the outbreak.

An electronic survey was sent out to students seen by Campus Health Service in an effort to identify a possible common exposure. 50 surveys were returned with no single meal or venue indicated as a likely source of the exposures.

Three of five stool samples sent to the NC State Laboratory of Public Health to be tested for norovirus were positive. Samples tested for salmonella, shigella, campylobacter and shiga-toxin producing ecoli and all were negative.

As of 5:00 p.m. today, Campus Health Services reported seeing five students for gastrointestinal issues. This is considered to be normal for this time of year and not necessarily related to last week's outbreak. As a preventative measure, Campus Dining and Campus Housing will utilize additional disinfecting measures specifically to eliminate norovirus in facilities where students have been ill.

Individuals can help prevent norovirus with proper hand washing and cleaning of commonly touched surfaces with bleach- based cleaning supplies. Foodhandlers should not work in food service until symptom-free for 72 hours after experiencing a noro-like illness.

Norovirus information resources:
NC Division of Public Health
http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/norovirus.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/features/norovirus/