February 10, 2022

Dear Campus Community,

As we conclude the third week of the spring semester, we are seeing that campus life is bringing with it an anticipated uptick in positive COVID-19 cases. We continue to monitor COVID trends in our community through our symptomatic and adaptive testing programs and our wastewater surveillance. In our highly vaccinated campus these cases manifest primarily in our undergraduate students who report experiencing minimal to moderate symptoms of infection. There are no hospitalizations to report.

The Public Health Promotion Center (PHPC) continues to hold COVID-19 vaccine clinics two days each week at the Campus Center. This week vaccine clinics are being offered Thursday and Friday from 3 to 6 p.m. Starting next week, vaccine clinics will be offered on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Thursdays from 1 to 4 p.m. through March 10. Walk-ins are accepted, but we encourage everyone to book an appointment.

The latest COVID-19 testing data for the UMass community from Feb. 2-8 shows 416 new positive cases. The university’s cumulative positivity rate is 7.45%, compared to last week’s rate of 4.48%. The state’s seven-day positivity rate is 4.08%. A similar uptick in cases has been experienced at other universities at the start of the semester.

UMass cases are predominately among undergraduate students connected to un-masked social activities, based on contact tracing assessments. We all must maintain vigilance in following the key public health protocols in place, including our indoor mask requirement. The UMass community is welcome to pick up free KN95 masks each week at the PHPC at the Campus Center.

The majority of positive cases are individuals who have COVID symptoms and are using the convenient unobserved testing kit. Please continue to monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms every day before coming to campus. If you feel unwell, stay home and get tested. University Health Services has symptomatic testing available for students, or, if you have an unobserved test kit on hand you can drop it off at one of the campus kiosks.

Thank you for all you are doing to care for yourselves and one another, and to support the health of our community.
Sincerely,

Co-Directors of the Public Health Promotion Center (PHPC)

Ann Becker, Public Health Director
Jeffrey Hescock, Executive Director of Environmental Health and Safety

University of Massachusetts Amherst