October 14, 2021

Dear Campus Community:

The Public Health Promotion Center (PHPC) is closely monitoring the results of the UMass Amherst COVID-19 testing program. For the fourth consecutive week we have seen a reduction in positive cases.

The latest data covering Oct. 6-12 shows 15 new positive cases. The university’s cumulative seven-day positivity rate is 0.27%. The state’s seven-day positivity rate is 2.01%. We continue to be extremely encouraged with the downward trend in the positivity rate and cases. Positive cases are predominately among undergraduate students connected to un-masked social activities. Most cases are of short duration resulting in mild-to-moderate illness. One staff member remains hospitalized. Details about case counts and vaccinations can be found on the university’s COVID-19 Dashboard, which is updated every Thursday.

The twice-weekly flu vaccination clinics at the PHPC on the lower level of the Campus Center have been busy. UMass students, faculty and staff - please schedule your flu vaccination appointments through the Campus Health Hub. Flu vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others against influenza.

Eligible Massachusetts residents can access the Pfizer COVID-19 booster shot. Please visit the UMass COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic website to determine if you are eligible and to schedule an appointment by going to the Vaccine Appointment Scheduling page.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel meets this week on booster recommendations for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines and whether it is safe to get a booster shot of a different brand than your initial vaccine. If approved by the FDA, CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, we will update the website and inform the campus community on eligibility.

Please maintain vigilance in following all public health protocols, including wearing masks indoors and while outdoors when social distancing is not possible. Everyone must continue to monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms every day before coming to campus. If you feel unwell, stay home, and get tested. Testing is free and readily available at the Public Health Promotion Center.
Please remember that the steps you take make an important difference. Continue to care for yourselves and one another.

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