February 17, 2022

Dear Campus Community,

We continue to monitor COVID-19 trends in our community through our symptomatic, adaptive and voluntary testing program as well as wastewater surveillance. The latest COVID-19 testing data for the UMass community from Feb. 9-15 shows 456 new positive cases. The university’s cumulative positivity rate is 7.38%, compared to last week’s rate of 7.76%. The state’s seven-day positivity rate is 2.90%.

Individuals testing positive continue to report they are experiencing minimal to moderate symptoms of infection, and there are no hospitalizations to report. Cases are predominately among undergraduate students connected to un-masked social activities. We recognize we remain above the regional and state positivity rates, but we’re encouraged by this week’s slight decline in positivity. While tracking case numbers in a highly vaccinated population has become less important in assessing campus health, it does remain a valuable metric.

Throughout the pandemic we have made our decisions based on federal and state guidance as well as local conditions and the unique aspects of communal life on a large residential campus. We are monitoring the changing guidance on mask wearing and will integrate that into our assessment of our specific campus and local community situations. Based on current conditions, our indoor mask requirement remains in effect.

In the meantime, we need to continue to do what’s needed to keep our community protected. The UMass community is welcome to come to the Public Health Promotion Center at the Campus Center to pick up KN95 masks and test kits each week, as we have an ample supply.

We also continue to hold COVID-19 vaccine clinics two days each week. Vaccine clinics are offered on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Thursdays from 1 to 4 p.m. through March 10. Walk-ins will be accepted, but we encourage everyone to book an appointment.

Please continue to monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms every day before coming to campus. If you feel unwell, stay home and get tested. UHS has
symptomatic testing available for students, or, if you have an unobserved test kit on hand you can drop it off in 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