March 8, 2022

Dear Campus Community,

Given the significantly improved public health environment of our campus and recent guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, effective Wednesday, March 9, at 7 a.m., the campus will lift its indoor mask requirement.

In keeping with government guidance, individuals will be welcome to wear masks at their own discretion but will only be required to wear masks aboard public transportation (including PVTA buses) and in healthcare facilities (including University Health Services, Public Health Promotion Center, and Center for Counseling and Psychological Health). Masks will also be required in the Center for Early Education and Child Care. Masks are recommended for individuals or anyone in their household who have a weakened immune system or an increased risk for severe illness. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated and boosted should also continue to wear masks indoors.

With this transition, we encourage everyone to respect the choices that individuals will make about their own masking. KN95 masks will remain available for free at the PHPC in the Campus Center. Please note that individuals or departments cannot create mask requirements separate from or more restrictive than university requirements. We also recognize that COVID-19 presents a fluid public health situation, and we may need to require face coverings in the future should guidance change.

Data indicates that severe illness is extremely rare within our highly vaccinated and boosted community. However, 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 at one of the campus kiosks. Individuals may seek reasonable accommodations for their own documented health conditions by contacting Disability Services (for students) and Accessible Workplace Office (for staff & faculty).
This change is a significant milestone as we continue to emerge from challenging times. Thank you for pulling together and supporting health, safety and wellbeing across our university 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