August 19, 2021

Dear Campus Community,

We are writing to share information regarding vaccines, testing protocols, quarantine and isolation measures, and the new location of the Public Health Promotion Center (PHPC) for the fall semester.

Vaccinations, which are required for faculty, staff and students, provide the most effective protection against COVID-19 for our campus community. We are pleased to announce that currently 98% of our domestic undergraduate and graduate students and 93% of faculty and staff are in compliance with the university’s COVID-19 vaccination requirement and we project that these percentages will continue to rise over the next few weeks. This extremely high compliance rate for faculty, staff, and students is worth celebrating as a community. Furthermore, Massachusetts, with 65% of its population vaccinated, has the second-highest percentage of its population fully vaccinated in the US.

The COVID-19 vaccines protect against the Delta variant, which is currently the predominant strain of the virus in the United States. The vaccines have been demonstrated to be overwhelmingly effective in preventing infection, serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19, including the Delta variant. In Massachusetts, “breakthrough” cases have occurred in only 0.29% of the nearly 4.4 million vaccinated individuals, resulting in generally mild or moderate symptoms and fewer than 500 hospitalizations since January 2021. Unvaccinated individuals account for almost all the recent COVID-19 hospitalizations. High levels of vaccination rates among the UMass community, coupled with the high vaccination rate in Massachusetts provide the campus with excellent protection.

We continue to be excited to welcome everyone back to a full-campus experience this fall.

Testing Protocols
For the fall semester:

- **Exempt Students** with approved COVID-19 vaccine medical or religious exemption are required to be tested twice a week.
- **Exempt Faculty and Staff** with approved COVID-19 vaccine medical or religious exemption are required to be tested once a week.
- **Students** who are in the process of getting fully vaccinated should get tested twice a week until two weeks after their second dose.
- **Faculty and staff** who are in the process of getting fully vaccinated should get tested once a week until twice weeks after their second dose.

**Vaccinated Faculty, Staff or Students** can get tested at their discretion. Community testing will also continue via the PHPC.
Vaccinated and exempt unvaccinated students, staff and faculty should test immediately whenever they are concerned about COVID-19 symptoms or when exposed to COVID-19. Individuals need to test within three to five days post-exposure. Whenever you are feeling ill, you must self-isolate until you get your test results. Your compliance with these measures will help us keep our community healthier and safer.

Faculty, staff and students have a variety of options for testing this fall:

- **Unobserved testing** is a free and flexible option that allows you to pick up a testing kit at the Public Health Promotion Center and drop off a completed kit, at your convenience, at any of our kiosks across campus. See the list of drop-off kiosk locations.

- **Limited observed asymptomatic testing** is free and available at the Public Health Promotion Center on the first floor of the Campus Center on a walk-in basis.

- **University Health Services** will continue to offer symptomatic testing by appointment. Your health insurance will be billed for testing and care you receive at UHS.

If you have any COVID-19 symptoms do not come to the PHPC for testing. Please utilize an unobserved test kit and drop it at a kiosk or contact University Health Services for an appointment.

**Quarantine and Isolation**
Due to full occupancy in residence halls, quarantine and isolation space on campus is limited. Isolation and quarantine for on-campus students should take place at their permanent/home residence. On-campus quarantine and isolation space will be made available only in limited instances. Since there is typically little time to prepare for isolation or quarantine when instructed to do so, the university has developed this planning guide to help individuals anticipate what they may need if they must isolate or quarantine.

**New Location of the Public Health Promotion Center (PHPC)**
The PHPC, currently located in the Mullins Center, will be moving to its new location on the first floor of the Campus Center on Monday, August 23.

The PHPC will continue to serve as the central coordinating COVID-19 response hub, which includes: COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic, observed asymptomatic testing location, unobserved testing distribution and operations, contact tracing, and quarantine and isolation. Get more information about the COVID-19 Testing Program and see all Testing FAQs.

Thank you for your continued vigilance in keeping one another healthy and safe.

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