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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

An Important Update for Fall Semester 2021

1 message

Chancellor Dannel Malloy <chancelloroffice@maine.edu>
Reply-To: chancelloroffice@maine.edu
To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu

Wed, Aug 18, 2021 at 2:29 PM



August 18, 2021



I'm writing with an important announcement about face coverings in our continuing fight against the pandemic.

Our fall return is upon us. For the first time since the onset of the global COVID pandemic, our campus communities are starting to fill again to a nearly normal population of new and returning students. Faculty and staff, some of whom have worked remotely through the pandemic, are returning to campus in larger numbers too. All of this can happen now not only because our campus-based living, learning, working, and research communities thrive from in-person interactions, but also because we are following science-based public health protocols that allow us to be together responsibly and safely.

While we're still in a pandemic, Maine remains a place with among the lowest number of COVID-19 cases and transmission in the nation. We have significant confidence that we can be together safely on our campuses this fall because safe and effective COVID vaccines are readily available. That's why we are requiring, with appropriate limited exceptions, proof of vaccination to participate in in-person experiences on our campuses.

I'm grateful to everyone who's already submitted their vaccine verification through our [online portal](#) and strongly encourage everyone who hasn't to do so as soon as possible.

But even with that, the advent of the highly transmissible COVID Delta variant demands that we take additional steps to ensure that our campus communities and broader communities are safe. Our weekly testing, isolation, and quarantine plans will remain in place to quickly identify and contain asymptomatic COVID cases in our communities.

With our classrooms and other indoor spaces no longer set up to impose social distancing, face coverings are an important strategy we can employ to effectively control the transmission of COVID, regardless of an individual's vaccination status and testing participation. The public health and epidemiological science on this point is irrefutable, and we will therefore responsibly wear face coverings indoors until we are certain it is no longer necessary to do so.

Thus, effective today, UMS will require face coverings indoors in all university facilities at least through the end of September. We'll evaluate the state of COVID transmission and the Delta variant at that point and reconsider whether to extend or drop the requirement thereafter.

Individuals working in an office by themselves with the door closed need not wear any face covering. We are considering whether we could safely and responsibly allow faculty and other instructors or presenters to temporarily remove a face covering while speaking or presenting in classrooms or presentation venues in which enhanced social distancing may be possible. And while we are not now requiring anyone to wear a face covering outdoors, doing so remains highly encouraged in large groups and especially if social distancing is impossible.

You can view the new guidance by visiting together.maine.edu.

We all want the pandemic behind us as soon as possible -- but we also want to be together safely this fall. Respecting these simple but vitally important public health protocols will not only make that most likely, but also prove how important the health and wellbeing of our entire campus communities are to each of us.

Thank you for respecting the health and safety of everyone around you, and have a great start to the fall semester!

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Chancellor

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