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Dannel P. Malloy

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

Get a Booster Shot to Keep Your University Safe

1 message

Chancellor Dannel Malloy <chancelloroffice@maine.edu>

Tue, Jan 4, 2022 at 3:52 PM

Reply-To: chancelloroffice@maine.edu

To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu



January 4, 2022



UMS Community,

A very Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you had a healthy and restful holiday break. As a community of learners and knowledge seekers, we're ready to get back for our Spring 2022 semester.

But we're coming back to once again face the challenge of an ever-changing pandemic. Omicron variant cases are raging explosively all around us, and many of the measures of the pandemic – testing positivity, case counts, and hospitalizations among them – are at or near their highest levels.

As we've done from the beginning of the pandemic, we're going to follow the science and adjust our COVID protocols so that we can be together as safely as possible and not contribute to the spread of the deadly COVID virus in and beyond Maine.

Let me get right to it.

Just as Maine's K-12 schools did yesterday, we're going to start on time, with classes beginning as scheduled two weeks from today on January 18. Face coverings will be required in all indoor spaces, with limited exceptions for eating that we followed last semester.

While all of our vaccination, exemption, and testing protocols continue from last semester too, the pandemic's evolution with the fast-spreading Omicron variant demands that we take greater advantage of the extra protection that booster shots give us. Thus, we'll be following new CDC guidance and, starting February 1, require regular testing for students who are not fully boosted by then. Returning residential students must also test and, unless they've had a booster shot or are very recently vaccinated, will be asked to quarantine to await negative test results for their initial test.

For faculty and staff, we're beginning discussions with our labor partners with the goal of adding booster requirements to our existing vaccination, exemption, and testing protocols.

We all know that there is no one single COVID safety protocol that will stop Omicron, Delta, or COVID generally from spreading. We use the combination of vaccines, face coverings, testing, isolation and quarantine, enhanced cleaning and hygiene, group size limitations and social distancing, and other measures together to limit COVID's spread and give us the best chance of staying together safely.

Even though booster shots have not yet been mandated by governmental authorities, the strong consensus of the medical, public health, and scientific communities is that booster shots *significantly increase our protection against COVID and its spread*. If the CDC adds booster shots to what it means to be fully vaccinated, we expect to do the same, and we could do

so sooner if it seems necessary to do so to maintain the health of our university communities. Everyone should get ready for that as soon as possible.

So let me be as clear as I can: *Get a booster shot now*. Do your part to make our university communities as safe as possible. Do your part to get us back together safely for the coming spring semester. And do your part to keep us together safely.

As all of these details get more complex and continue to change, please remember to refer to the [Together for Maine](#) website and your university's own specific guidance to stay current and to understand our most current public health and safety protocols.

I am so grateful for everything you've done to keep us together safely so far, and know our university communities can count on you to do so again.

Sincerely,



Chancellor
University of Maine System

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