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## COVID-19 President Memo\_September 8, 2020

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

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Matthew Revitt &lt;matthew.revitt@maine.edu&gt;

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## Maine Memo — September 8

1 message

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**UMaine President's Office** <umaine.president@maine.edu>

Tue, Sep 8, 2020 at 8:23 PM

Reply-To: UMaine President's Office &lt;umaine.president@maine.edu&gt;

To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu



# MAINE MEMO



## From Joan Ferrini-Mundy

**President of the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias**

Dear members of the UMaine and UMM communities,

I hope that the beginning of our second week of classes and being back together on campus finds you well, and enjoying these glorious Maine September days. Today I call to everyone's attention the several interrelated health and safety measures we have in place. These approaches outlined in the Black Bear and Clipper Pacts are geared to keep ourselves and one another safe.

My focus today is on **testing**. The University of Maine System put in place a widespread coronavirus asymptomatic testing program, first announced July 1, to be launched through a three-phased process.

Phases one and two were considered **baseline** testing — our way of establishing the incidence rate of the virus as a large influx of people joined us in our communities for the academic year. The primary goal of that expansive testing process was to identify asymptomatic cases, and then follow up with those individuals and their contacts, to prevent further spread of the disease on our campuses.

The 13,554 asymptomatic test results we have received to date have identified and allowed us to isolate 13 cases of COVID-19 infection at our University of Maine System universities that may have otherwise gone undetected.

Phase three of our testing program is **surveillance and monitoring**, which has a different goal. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the goals of surveillance testing are to provide a more complete estimate of how common COVID-19 is — to help us understand the incidence of infection, or likely prevalence rate — on our campuses. The results of surveillance and monitoring then allow us to intensify our public health control measures as needed, such as symptom tracking or distancing protocols, or to introduce additional testing, depending on what we learn. The primary methodology for surveillance testing, and the one where you have a role, is random testing of appropriate percentages of people on the campuses. That will allow us to estimate prevalence, and possibly to identify cases.

The secondary methodology, for monitoring, is wastewater testing. This is only feasible at UMaine, not UMM, because of the ways our sewage infrastructure is configured and other factors. Wastewater testing for coronavirus can provide an early warning signal that there is an increase in viral shedding on campus.

Tomorrow, many of you will receive an invitation to be tested on campus as part of the phase three asymptomatic testing efforts. Individuals — students, faculty, and staff — are being selected at random from a roster of people spending time in a UMaine or UMM facility. By randomly sampling, we get a more accurate estimate of the prevalence of cases on campus. This testing will continue every 10 days throughout the semester, so you may be invited to participate again.

I appreciate your attention to this request, should you get one, and point you to [um.covidtesting@maine.edu](mailto:um.covidtesting@maine.edu) if you have questions. Your participation is key to helping us obtain a statistical picture of the prevalence of this virus on our campuses, and keep our campuses safe, open, and vibrant.

Thank you for all that you are doing to help us strive for health on our campuses this fall as we face the challenges of the coronavirus.