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COVID-19 President_COVID-19 Community Update, November 7, 2020

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

COVID-19 Community Update from President Ferrini-Mundy

1 message

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

Sat, Nov 7, 2020 at 2:10 PM

Reply-To: UMaine President's Office <umaine.president@maine.edu>

To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Dear University of Maine community members:

Today, we are providing an update on the outbreak of COVID-19 cases among employees who work in our Facilities Management (FM) offices on our Orono campus. Asymptomatic testing of Facilities Management staff since Thursday has resulted in the identification of additional positive cases out of 43 total tests administered, bringing the total number of positive cases among FM staff members to 10.

All of the employees who have tested positive have mild or no symptoms at this time, and none have been hospitalized. They are isolating at home and doing well, and have the support of UMaine and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

All but one of the affected employees are members of the administrative staff.

UMaine also has five students living off campus who have tested positive and are self-isolating under Maine CDC guidance. We have no residential students isolating on campus.

As noted in my [community message](#) on Thursday, UMaine's positive cases are not in its residential campus community at this time.

Since the first report of a positive test among FM staff, robust contact tracing has been underway through the UMaine Emergency Operations Center. Through UMaine contact tracing, any member of the university community considered a close contact is notified, and the latest health and safety guidance is provided.

To be clear: Members of the UMaine community are notified if they have had close contact as defined by the CDC with any university employee or student who has tested positive. Maine CDC also does contact tracing.

This coming week, any of the 240 Facilities Management staff members who have not opted for COVID-19 testing will receive testing on campus. That will include the 80 members of the custodial team.

Facilities Management's continuity of operations plan is in place, and the leadership will limit the number of FM employees working on campus in the coming week.

The Facilities Management office building on campus, the location where the cases seem to be concentrated, will be closed next week for deep cleaning. It is reassuring that all but five of the FM employees who opted in for asymptomatic testing this week were tested negative.

All members of the UMaine community have been committed to our health and safety protocols this semester to maintain the well-being of all. But the Facilities Management team has been particularly assiduous in its efforts to keep each other and all of us safe — strict on the use of face coverings, social distancing and hand hygiene.

The FM outbreak is indicative of the uptick in community spread of coronavirus happening statewide and nationally. To date, there have been no commonalities among close contacts or life and work experiences of those employees who have tested positive apart from the facility where they work. Thursday, targeted wastewater testing at FM buildings on campus detected the presence of the COVID-19 virus, but at levels below the positive test threshold.

With community transmission increasingly strong and widespread in Maine, members of the UMaine community must be more vigilant and more committed than ever to best practices in health and safety. Testing in the coming weeks will continue to focus on identifying and isolating any positive cases in both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.

UMaine is now in round six of phase three COVID-19 testing on campus. Dates for the next round will be announced and those selected for the randomized testing will receive email notifications. In total, including random testing, amplified testing for FM personnel and upcoming amplified testing for selected students, UMaine will be conducting approximately 7,000 tests this month.

Residential students and in-person out-of-state students living off campus will be provided with amplified testing prior to leaving for the Thanksgiving break and transitioning to remote learning modality for the remainder of the fall semester. The details of this will soon be finalized and announced.

If you or people you know in the UMaine community have concerns about COVID-19 symptoms, close contact or a positive test, call the COVID-19 info line at 207.581.2681 or fill out the online [self-reporting form](#) or email umaine.alerts@maine.edu.

Please be well and take care of yourselves. We will get through this, together.