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11-5-2020

## COVID-19 President\_COVID-19 Community Update\_November 5, 2020

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

## COVID-19 Community Update from President Ferrini-Mundy

2 messages

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

Thu, Nov 5, 2020 at 5:16 PM

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

To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Dear University of Maine community members:

This week, five UMaine employees have tested positive for COVID-19. All are administrative staff who work in Facilities Management offices on campus in Orono. They are experiencing minor symptoms, isolating at home and doing well. UMaine and Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention are involved in supporting all the employees.

To confirm: The affected employees are administrative staff, not employees responsible for daily maintenance of campus buildings. These administrative employees do not circulate widely across campus, in buildings or residence halls.

In addition, this week two UMaine students living off campus tested positive, bringing to three the total number of students who are self-isolating under Maine CDC guidance. We have no residential students isolating on campus.

We have great concern for our students and colleagues currently in isolation, and hope for their quick and complete recovery. We have successfully managed cases of infection and limited the spread of the virus in our community and throughout the region because of our science-based strategies and our commitment to safety practices. COVID-19 cases are on the rise across Maine and we must all be even more diligent now in our handwashing, safe distancing and wearing of face coverings to keep each other safe.

The UMaine Contact Tracing Team is working in conjunction with the Maine CDC to notify any person who is identified as being a close contact. Out of an abundance of caution, free COVID-19 testing has been made available to all Facilities Management employees beginning this afternoon. The good news is that some FM employees already have been tested and results have come back negative.

All health and safety protocols are in place for deep cleaning of offices and vehicles used by the employees who have tested positive.

The University of Maine System's multifaceted approach to identifying COVID-19 infection and limiting spread on university campuses and in Maine communities includes [weekly wastewater sampling](#) for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 at UMaine, the University of Maine at Fort Kent and the Gorham campus of the University of Southern Maine, led by the UMS Scientific Advisory Board.

Wastewater is collected at UMaine once a week and the results have been negative (below the limit of detection) up until this week. The collection from Nov. 3 was tested Nov. 4 and found to have low, but clearly detectable levels of virus, quantified as 9600 virus equivalents per liter (vE/L). This positive result is low, but above the limit of detection (5000 vE/L).

These wastewater testing results are updated on the [together.maine.edu](#) dashboard and in daily briefings reported to the media. Last week a low, but detectable level of the virus was noted in the sample collected on Oct. 28 [at the Orono Water Pollution Control Facility](#). A follow-up sample collected on Oct. 30 indicated virus levels were in the low to undetectable range. Wastewater testing is done in partnership with the town of Orono.

Wastewater testing has been shown in several studies to be [an early indicator of changes](#) in infection prevalence, due

to its ability to detect infections even before they are symptomatic. Therefore, this week's positive test at UMaine aligns with the statewide increase in community spread.

The presence of SARS-CoV2 in campus wastewater serves as a community reminder to increase vigilance about avoiding gatherings, ensuring physical distancing, wearing face coverings and practicing good hand hygiene. We thank you for your ongoing diligence in following health and safety guidance. All of us are key to the well-being of each other and the UMaine community.

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](mailto:umaine.alerts@maine.edu).

UMaine's next round in phase three COVID-19 testing on campus this semester is Nov. 17–19. Notifications will be sent by email for those selected for randomized testing.

The Maine CDC reports community spread of COVID-19 is on the rise in Maine. All of the efforts that all of you are making to stay safe, to stay away from campus if you have symptoms, to use face coverings, and to participate in testing are more critical now than ever. When there are positive cases of COVID-19 among campus community members, we have all of the systems in place to support those individuals, and provide space and help as needed.

We are well prepared to address whatever comes to us with this virus, and I thank all of the many people who participate on our many planning teams. I thank all at UMaine, and our neighbors and partners in Orono for working together to keep our communities safe.

Sincerely,

Joan Ferrini-Mundy  
President

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**Madison Riley** <madison.s.riley@maine.edu>  
To: Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

Thu, Nov 5, 2020 at 6:01 PM

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Madison Riley  
*She/Her/Hers*  
University of Maine

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** UMaine President's Office <[umaine.president@MAINE.EDU](mailto:umaine.president@MAINE.EDU)>  
**Date:** November 5, 2020 at 5:25:30 PM EST  
**To:** "UM-UNDERGRAD-ALL-ENROLLED@lists.maine.edu" <[UM-UNDERGRAD-ALL-ENROLLED@LISTS.MAINE.EDU](mailto:UM-UNDERGRAD-ALL-ENROLLED@LISTS.MAINE.EDU)>  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Community Update from President Ferrini-Mundy

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