



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

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Memorandum

Date: August 5, 2021

To: UNC System Chancellors

From: Peter Hans

Re: Fall 2021 COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

As we prepare for the start of the fall semester, I want to thank all of you for your steady leadership and for the dedicated work of your teams. Balancing the need to protect public health while meeting our core mission of teaching, research, and public service has not been easy, and all of us have grappled with hard decisions over the past year. We will remain vigilant as the course of the COVID pandemic continues to evolve.

One of the most important aspects of our response over the last year has been avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach, recognizing that circumstances and capacities are different at each of our institutions. We will continue to make decisions together based on public health guidance and the best available data, allowing each institution to adapt to changing local conditions.

The guidance below tracks with recent announcements from state and federal authorities about mitigating the threat of COVID-19 while moving our campuses closer to normal operations. I know from our recent discussions that these measures are already in place on your campuses, and I appreciate all of the thoughtful work behind those efforts.

Let's continue to support one another and show understanding and compassion for everyone in our communities doing their best through challenging circumstances. I'm grateful to work alongside you.

Get Vaccinated or Get Tested Regularly

Vaccination is our best weapon against the virus. Vaccines are safe, free, and highly effective against all known variants. Since the vaccine became available last spring, you have made extraordinary efforts to vaccinate both your campus communities and the general public, administering more than 92,000 vaccinations at clinics across the state. We will continue to offer free, life-saving vaccines to students, faculty, and staff on campus, and we will continue to encourage and incentivize every eligible person to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

For the coming fall semester, all of you plan to:

1. Request students provide proof of vaccination,
2. Conduct student reentry testing and regular surveillance testing, and
3. Exempt from testing students who have voluntarily provided proof of vaccination.

The message to our students is clear: get vaccinated or get tested regularly and quarantine if necessary.

Chancellors should exercise their administrative authority over personnel at their institutions by putting a “get vaccinated or get tested regularly” measure in place for their faculty and staff. I think it’s reasonable, both for public health and for leadership by example, to ask our faculty and staff to comply with the same protective measures we are asking of our students.

Chancellors have the authority to tailor strategies that best meet the unique circumstances and local community conditions of each campus. In developing your “get vaccinated or get tested regularly” plans for faculty and staff, Chancellors may wish to evaluate the OSHR policy implementing the Governor’s latest Executive Order (EO224) that will be issued on or before Aug. 13. We are conducting the same evaluation for System Office employees and have already put in place vaccination reporting for all System Office employees.

Face Coverings

Because of the unique circumstances of each institution, Chancellors should adopt face covering protocols that reflect local health conditions and best meet the needs of your campus. Of course, where applicable, campuses must continue to comply with face covering protocols required by Executive Orders, OSHA, standards for health care settings, standards for clinical and laboratory settings, and other similar requirements.

Other COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

Among other mitigation strategies (such as signage, communications, and incentives to encourage vaccination, etc.), all of you report the strategies listed below, which proved effective during the previous academic year in mitigating against the spread of COVID-19.

Contact Tracing

All of you report that you will continue to conduct contact tracing consistent with CDC guidance and plan to continue coordinating with your local health departments.

Isolation and Quarantine

All of you report that you will continue to follow CDC guidance on isolation and quarantine protocols.

Ventilation, Cleaning, and Disinfecting

All of you report efforts to ensure ventilation systems in campus facilities are operating properly and to make improvements as needed. In addition, all of you report that you will continue to follow CDC, OSHA, and other similar guidance for cleaning and disinfecting facilities.

Information Sharing

Last year, your public-facing COVID-19 dashboards proved an effective means for communicating conditions on your campus. All of you report that you plan to continue to maintain updated campus dashboards.

As we all know, state law reserves the right to mandate immunization for university students to the North Carolina Commission for Public Health. As we continue to fight our way through the pandemic, we will continue to adapt to ever-evolving conditions and recommendations.

Throughout this pandemic, you have remained focused on fulfilling our university's core mission in the safest and most responsible way possible. I know you will maintain that balance as we prepare for the new academic year.