Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

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11/5/2021—COVID-19 CAMPUS UPDATE

Dear PIMS Community,

Here is the COVID-19 report for the week ending November 5, 2021

QUICK TAKE

Let's begin with the fact that for the week ending October 29, 2021, we reported one case and a positivity rate of >.01%. That information was inaccurate as the individual ending up testing negative a few days in a row, thus the initial reading was a "false positive." As such, the positivity rate for the week ending October 29, 2021 was 0!!!!!

For this week, one student reported to us they were feeling ill and conscientiously contacted the Dean who advised them to get a COVID-19 PCR test. The PCR results were reported as "Negative." That said, our POSITIVITY RATE WAS A 0 FOR A SECOND CONSECUTIVE WEEK!!!!!!!!!

Such a rate is remarkable at this point, but with the Halloween weekend past us and case counts exponentially increasing in Allegheny County this past week, due diligence is still the operative word. Thus, a gentle reminder to please continue to follow all mitigation strategies including but not limited to social distancing, masking, and upon your discretion getting vaccinated or a booster. As always, if positivity rates would exceed the optimal level proposed by the CDC (>5%), this situation would be re-evaluated.

Testing, courtesy of Curative (https://curative.com/) , continues at our new property on Wednesdays. This testing site is provided as a courtesy to those who might otherwise not be able to access a convenient testing site; yet you can get a PCR TEST anywhere as long as unvaccinated individuals report results each week to the Dean. If a vaccinated person is feeling ill or believes they may have been exposed, it is worthwhile they would be tested and send the results to the Dean.

COVID CASE REPORTING FOR THE WEEK:

Week ending:	# Of New Cases Confirmed	Date of confirmed test results	Positivity Rate (out of 125 people who are on ground—students, faculty, and staff)
October 22, 2021	1	10/21/21	>1%
October 29, 2021	0		0% (adjusted 11/5/2021)
November 5, 2021	0		0%

VACCINATION AND BOOSTER RATES
The vaccination rates are stable:
- Students: 82% which is unchanged from last week
- Faculty and Staff: 100% which was not reported last week because the combined rate of students and staff was offered.

This week we will begin reporting on booster rates:
- Students: No data available
  - Moving forward, as students get boosters, please report this information with proof to Mr. Kevin Drobish. He is keeping the numbers on this information.
- Faculty and Staff on campus:
  - 15 faculty and staff members report to the campus weekly
  - As of this reporting 8 of 15 or 53% are not only fully vaccinated but also have received the booster

shot. The goal is 100%!

Speaking of the booster…

In a repeat message from last week, for those who are fully vaccinated, booster shots are available at this point if you qualify. The booster shot process may be unclear for some so listed in the table below are some key points directly from the CDC website:

IF YOU RECEIVED Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna	IF YOU RECEIVED Johnson & Johnson's Janssen
You are eligible for a booster if you are: • 65 years or older • Age 18+ who live in long-term care settings • Age 18+ who have underlying medical conditions • Age 18+ who work or live in high-risk settings **When to get a booster:** At least 6 months after your second shot **Which booster should you get?** Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States	**You are eligible for a booster if you are:** 18 years or older **When to get a booster:** At least 2 months after your shot **Which booster should you get?** Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States

If you received the Johnson and Johnson/Janssen shot 2 months ago or more, you are eligible for a booster RIGHT NOW. If you received the Pfizer or Moderna shot 6 months ago or more, you may receive a booster based on the requirement that you work in high-risk setting (funeral service is considered part of front-line health care workers). Check out https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html for more information on booster shots.

If you wish to get a booster shot, the major pharmacies make it easy to book your appointment in advance through the websites, but some will accommodate walk in appointments so finding a shot is not difficult if you want it. The PIMS administration encourages you to talk with your healthcare professional about being vaccinated (if you are not) as well as getting the booster shot. If you are medically cleared and have no religious exemptions, the PIMS administration strongly encourages everyone to receive the vaccine and/or the booster (when eligible)

OTHER INFO:
With another 0 for this week, you are to be commended! Let's keep it up!
That said, please continue to keep the administration informed should you feel sick or your vaccination/booster status changes—to date everyone has been doing an outstanding job in this regard as well.

On a different topic, please note that if you have children or younger siblings, on Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2021, the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) unanimously voted to approve administration of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to children ages 5-11.

Finally, we continue to be fortunate avoiding significant spread of COVID-19. Thanks to due diligence on YOUR part with mitigation efforts and high vaccination rates, positivity rates remain at acceptable levels. We encourage you to keep this trend going as we head into the holidays. Celebrate responsibly by avoiding high-risk activities like spending time indoors unmasked especially with symptomatic, sick, or unvaccinated individuals, as well as gathering in large, unmasked groups.

Sincerely

Dr. Barry T. Lease, Program Director/COO