



Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

www.pims.edu

10/29/2021—COVID-19 CAMPUS UPDATE

Dear PIMS Community,

Here is the COVID-19 report for the week ending October 29, 2021:

QUICK TAKE

Five students reported to us they were feeling ill and conscientiously contacted the Dean who advised them to get a COVID-19 PCR test. None of the students came to campus and all reported getting a test. Four of the five students reported back “NEGATIVE” results for COVID-19 and one student has not yet reported anything throughout the week. In short, the Positivity Rate remained stable...

...therefore, in a message specifically for Class 165, THERE WILL BE NO MOVE TO THE THIRD FLOOR FOR CLASSES NEXT WEEK. The Dean introduced this idea, which was proposed by the Program Director, as a means of offering more social distancing out of an abundance of caution. Due to the continued low infection rate on campus, this move to the third floor WILL NOT BE MANDATED NEXT WEEK. However, if positivity rates would exceed the optimal level proposed by the CDC, 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.

Confirmed positive case rates were, once again, extremely low with only ONE positive reported case to the Dean. Ironically, this individual was asymptomatic but got tested for other reasons; this individual continues to experience no symptoms. While our positivity rate continues to be below the optimal level of 5% suggested by the CDC, with Halloween weekend upon us, 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.

COVID CASE REPORTING FOR THE WEEK:

Week ending:	# Of New Cases Confirmed	Date	Positivity Rate (out of 125 people who are on ground—students, faculty, and staff)
October 22, 2021	1	10/21/21	.01
October 29, 2021	1	10/25/21	.01

VACCINATION RATES

The vaccination rates are as follows:

- 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.

HOW ABOUT BOOSTERS?

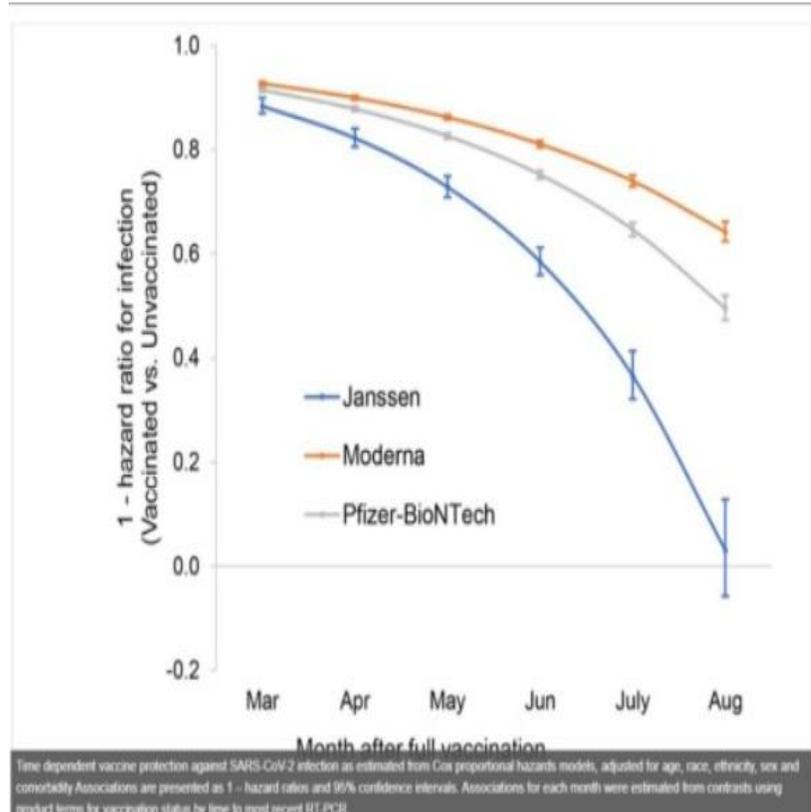
For those who are fully vaccinated, booster shots are available at this point if you qualify. The booster shot process may be unclear for some so listed in the table below are some key points directly from the CDC website:

IF YOU RECEIVED Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna	IF YOU RECEIVED Johnson & Johnson's Janssen
You are eligible for a booster if you are:	You are eligible for a booster if you are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	18 years or older
When to get a booster: At least 6 months after your second shot	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	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.

Finally, to guide your decision as to which booster to get, this information from a soon to be released peer reviewed study on almost 620,000 veterans is offered to you: <https://www.phi.org/press/breakthrough-infection-study-of-over-600000-veterans-shows-declining-covid-19-vaccine-protection/>. As you can see, vaccine efficacy in all cases declined over a period of 6 months, but for one vaccine in particular the decline was more significant:



OTHER INFO:

Last week served as the baseline week for new case reporting and positivity rate, but the data for this week continues to offer encouraging results about the prevalence of COVID-19 in our community. It should be noted that contact tracing showed the one case reported was not in the building for six full days prior to testing positive, however, the timeline may pre-date the reporting.

In closing, we appreciate your understanding of this ever-evolving situation as COVID-19 continues, but so far this term, we have been fortunate to avoid significant spread of COVID-19, thanks to due diligence with mitigation efforts and high vaccination rates. Let's keep this trend going as we head into the holidays. Celebrate responsibly by avoiding high-risk activities like spending time indoors unmasked, or gathering in large, unmasked groups.

Sincerely

Dr. Barry T. Lease, Program Director/COO