



Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

www.pims.edu

11/15/2021—COVID-19 CAMPUS UPDATE

Dear PIMS Community,

Here is the COVID-19 report for the week ending November 12, 2021 (our apologies for the delay)

QUICK TAKE

Two positive cases were reported over the past week. Contact tracing shows that both individuals reported their results upon testing and both individual never entered the building throughout the week. The timing is still inconclusive on the infection date, but the contact tracing shows an encouraging trend; kudos to the student body for their due diligence in monitoring this evolving situation. In what is now a daily task performed by Dean Burns and I each morning, cleaning protocols and sanitization procedures were performed, with special emphasis on high contact areas.

With Halloween weekend in the rear-view mirror, case counts are continuing to increase in Allegheny County. As Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays approach, 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. While our positivity rate for the week ending was an acceptable 1.6%, if positivity rates would exceed the optimal level proposed by the CDC (>5%), this situation at the Institute would be re-evaluated.

In spite of the technical glitch where our site did not get “turned on” prior to Wednesday last week, testing continues courtesy of Curative (<https://curative.com/>) at our new property on Wednesdays as usual. 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. Please note, if you are unvaccinated, you cannot be admitted to the building without following the mandatory testing protocols. 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	10/25/21	0 (adjusted 11/5/2021)
November 5, 2021	0 (with one possible)	-	0 (awaiting results)
November 12, 2021	2	11/11/21	1.6%

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: Limited data available as some students have reported receiving the booster, but this data will continue to be collected
 - Note to all: 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 9 of 15 or 60% are now fully vaccinated and 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
<p>You are eligible for a booster if you are:</p> <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 	<p>You are eligible for a booster if you are:</p> <p>18 years or older</p> <p>When to get a booster: At least 2 months after your shot</p> <p>Which booster should you get? Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States</p>
<p>When to get a booster: At least 6 months after your second shot</p>	
<p>Which booster should you get? Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States</p>	

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 two positive cases the positivity rate at the school continues to be quite acceptable at 1.6%. 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.

In closing, we continue to be fortunate that we have avoided a significant spread of COVID-19 on campus. 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. In accordance with CDC recommendations, everyone should continue to avoid high-risk activities and spaces to the fullest extent possible, for example, unmasked indoor spaces, unmasked time around symptomatic or unvaccinated people, or gathering in large, unmasked groups. Finally, while this seems awkward, please note that eating and drinking in large group settings are higher risk activities due the nature of the being unmasked to perform such functions—please just consider these recommendations so we can continue to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely

Dr. Barry T. Lease, Program Director/COO