



Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

www.pims.edu

12/17/2021—COVID-19 CAMPUS UPDATE

Dear PIMS Community,

Here is the COVID-19 report for the week ending December 17, 2021.

QUICK TAKE

Sorry for the delay in this final report for 2021.

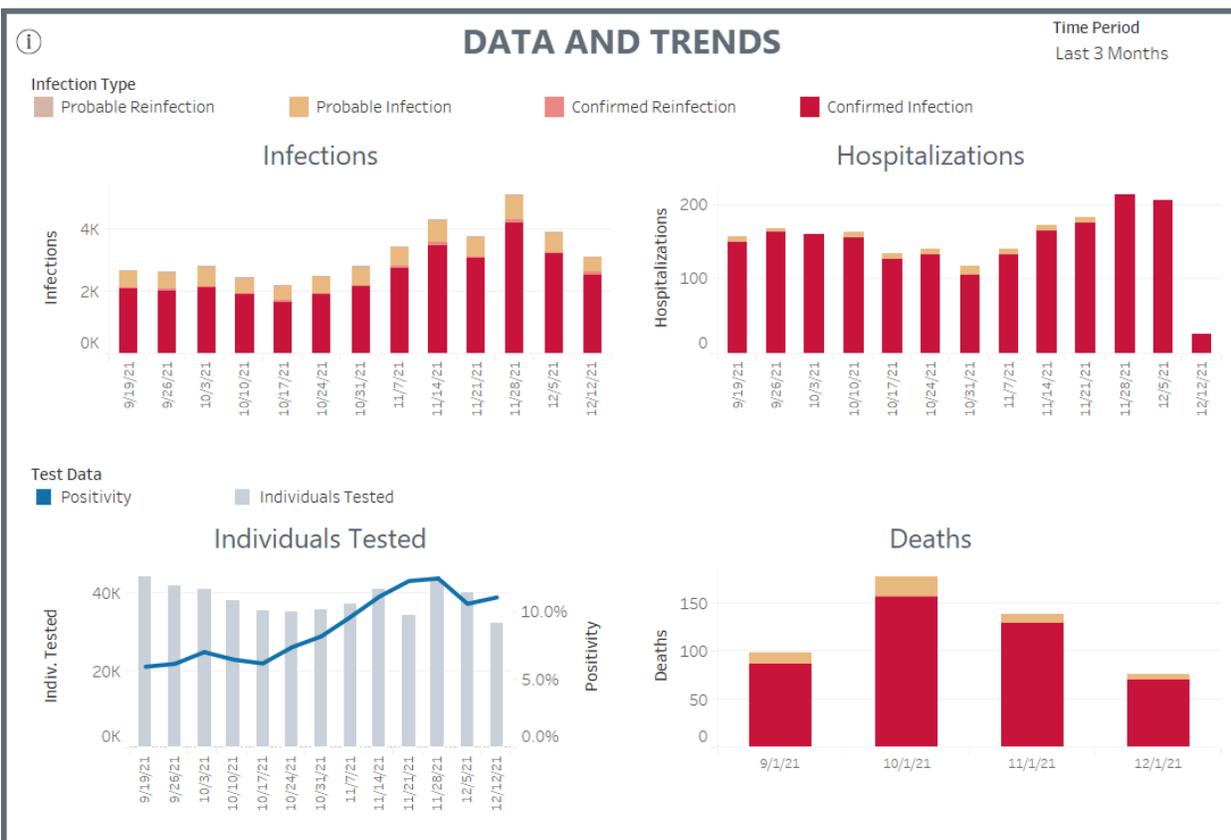
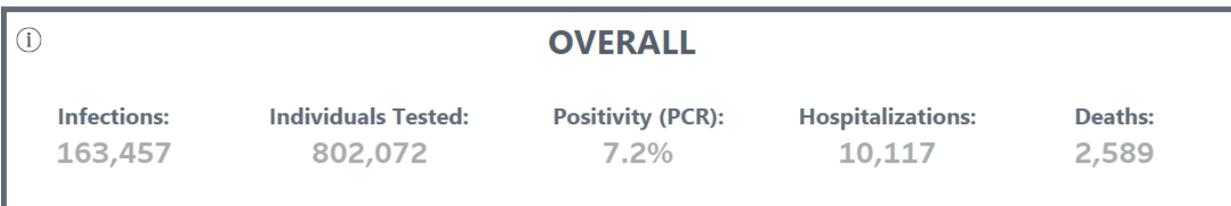
For the week, no new positive cases were reported so this is very good news at the PIMS campus. Your collective due diligence and consideration of each other is noteworthy. While the news at the PIMS campus going into the break is encouraging, that is not the case throughout Allegheny County (and perhaps the world it seems like).

Case counts in Pennsylvania remain high. As the omicron variant begins to surge across the country, all schools are taking note with some having moved to remote learning for campus students. That is not our intention at this point, but the fact is omicron has once again changed the situation and we must remain vigilant. We will continue our mitigation strategies and adapt as necessary to the changing virus conditions when you return in 2022.

The most recent data in Allegheny County shows a “mixed bag” of information with community spread still at a high transmissibility rate, yet reported case counts perhaps plateauing for the previous delta variant wave. It also appears hospitalizations and deaths have showed a downward trend, BUT this represents delta as the predominant strain, not omicron... Here is the most recent data from the Allegheny County Health Department listed below:



COVID-19 in ALLEGHENY COUNTY



Last Updated:
12/20/2021 1:04:54 PM

Testing will continue in 2022 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. Additionally, if there is a question about how a student, vaccinated, booster, or not, is feeling as they enter the building, the Institute has adopted limited abilities to do Rapid Antigen tests as another tool in keeping the campus safe and secure—it appears that omicron may present with different symptoms, specifically no fever or loss of taste, thus an antigen quick test may be the only way we can stop someone from entering the building who is not feeling well.

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
November 5, 2021	0		0
November 12, 2021	2	11/11/21	1.6%
November 19, 2021	2	11/16/21, 11/18/21	1.6%
December 3, 2021	0		0%
December 10, 2021	1	12/6/2021	<1%
December 17, 2021	0		0%

VACCINATION AND BOOSTER RATES

The vaccination rates are stable:

- Students: 82% which is unchanged from last week
- Faculty and Staff: 100% (cannot get any better than that statistic)

This week for the booster rates:

- Students on campus:
 - 110 report weekly
 - No changes reported to this number: 2.7% of the entire student body (vaccinated and unvaccinated).
 - This number represents 3.3% of the student population fully vaccinated
 - Note to all: Please continue to 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
 - The PIMS faculty and staff remains at 80% but the goal is 100%.

Check out <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html> for 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 no positive cases over the last week, this is good news for the Institute. However, we are at an inflection point with omicron: Mitigation is more important now. Please avoid risky behaviors over the break.

While acknowledging your collective sacrifices this year, we want to focus on the positive. We have successfully navigated many changes. Now it’s time for the next one.

As always, with the help from our partners at the Allegheny County Health Department, we will continue to closely monitor the developing situation regarding the spread of omicron. If it is determined that additional mitigation measures are needed for a safe return to campus in January, we will communicate those measures to you as soon as

possible, so please continue to check your email during Winter Recess for any updates.

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 we head to the end of the year, we simply cannot predict how this situation will move forward. We can encourage everyone to continue practicing mitigation strategies in your personal life and if you do feel “sick” then please get tested—an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in this case.

Moving forward, we often draw good information from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Response team. As we conclude 2021 with hope towards 2022, the following passage from their website seemed to be appropriate in its narrative:

Living with COVID-19 is like being on a long flight: There are patches of calm, when we are free to move about the cabin—and there are times of turbulence, when we need to fasten our seatbelts. The difference is passengers on a flight can't control the weather. But in the age of COVID-19, when turbulence hits and everybody follows public safety regulations to the letter, we actually can impact the conditions around us and reduce turbulence. The Pitt community as a whole has supported each other on a bumpy flight this year. We have adapted remarkably. We know this strong community will continue to support each other, and we are proud to be part of it. Best wishes to everyone for a safe, healthy, and restorative winter break.

In short, we could not have said it any better than Pitt! To that end, we continue to thank every PIMS community member who has been vaccinated, received a booster, or continues to willingly provide test results each week as well as everyone who wears a mask and practices other mitigation strategies in order to minimize the risk of variants further spreading. Thank you for your continued support.

Wishing you all a very happy, healthy, and joyous Holiday season!

Sincerely,

Dr. Barry T. Lease, Program Director/COO