

Dear Harvard Community Members,

I write with a few updates and reminders regarding our COVID pandemic protocols and vaccine availability. I remain optimistic as public health conditions, combined with increased vaccine supply, are permitting Massachusetts to advance its reopening and vaccine distribution plans. However, I want to offer a critical reminder that we can't let our guard down. In recent weeks, the case declines we saw earlier in 2021 have stalled rather than gone down further. Nationally, the number of active infections now mirrors the number we saw in late December. The infections we are seeing are largely in unvaccinated people, and personal travel greatly increases risk. Infections continue to appear among Harvard community members.

### **COVID-19 Protocols**

Even with the anticipation of broader access to vaccine, it is important that we continue to put health and safety first, and that we Keep "Keeping" Harvard Healthy through the actions we have been taking. Even after you have been fully vaccinated (see definition below), you are still expected to follow campus safety protocols: Wear masks properly (snug fit, covering mouth AND nose), practice physical distancing, wash hands frequently, avoid eating/drinking with people outside your household, limit the number of people you come in close contact with, use the [Crimson Clear](#) app any day that you will be on campus, and participate fully in the University COVID testing program that applies to you.

I do want to assure you that as we see greater percentages of our community vaccinated and new cases of COVID-19 decline, we will share updates to our protocols and guidance, including physical distancing and gathering sizes. I am confident we will get to a place where we can start to interact and engage on campus and our surrounding community in more normal ways. However, as I shared above, we are not there yet.

### **Vaccines Are Safe and Effective**

We continue to see more data about the COVID-19 vaccines. Millions of people in the United States have safely received one of the authorized vaccines, in addition to the tens of thousands who participated in the initial clinical trials. Fully vaccinated persons have outstanding protection against severe illness from COVID-19, essentially bringing risk of hospitalization and death to near zero. Vaccinated persons still might get infected, though serious illness is unlikely.

### **Vaccine Availability Update**

HUHS continues to receive only a very limited amount of vaccine at this time, and in the last couple of weeks that limited supply has been focused on second doses for those people who received their first dose from HUHS. With the state still targeting April 19 as the beginning of Phase 3 of its vaccination plan, we are hopeful that we will see increased vaccine availability, including more vaccine coming to HUHS. In anticipation of that, we continue to plan the logistics for broader distribution of the vaccine, including how we will alert, schedule and administer vaccine to larger portions of our community. We will update you on our plans as we get more direction from the state on vaccine availability.

### **Plan Your Vaccine**

Even though many in our community are not currently eligible to receive vaccine, it is important that you plan ahead, understand how you can find out or be notified about your eligibility, and know what your options are for getting vaccinated. Please seek vaccine from all available sources, including state-run vaccination sites, your primary care physician, community-based sites, and pharmacies.

- If you are in Massachusetts you can [pre-register for appointments](#) at state-run sites and also find information about other sites, including pharmacies, through the [VaxFinder](#) tool.
- If you are outside Massachusetts, but in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [offers links](#) to a nationwide VaccineFinder (developed in conjunction with our colleagues at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital), as well as to your state's Department of Health.
- If you are currently outside of the United States, please check with your country's public health agency.

### **Let Us Know You Are Fully Vaccinated**

Sharing that you have been vaccinated with HUHS helps us to estimate the number of doses we will need as supplies increase. It will also help us understand the level of protection in our community, so we can make decisions about future policies and protocols. If you have been vaccinated, a clear copy of your completed COVID vaccination card can be emailed to HUHS at [mrecords@huhs.harvard.edu](mailto:mrecords@huhs.harvard.edu).

And, to clarify, you are not considered fully vaccinated until at least two weeks after your second dose of a two-dose series, like Pfizer's or Moderna's vaccine, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson.

Across the country and here within our local community, we continue to see encouraging progress as more individuals are vaccinated. As I said before, I am optimistic and look forward to when we can all gather freely; work, learn, teach and research together in-person; travel and get back to normal.

Let's all keep doing what we are doing. Plan your vaccine and let's Keep "Keeping" Harvard Healthy.

Sincerely,

Giang T. Nguyen  
Executive Director  
Harvard University Health Services