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Forward Together Update, September 29, 2021

University of Northern Iowa

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Forward Together Update

Dear Panther Community,

Cases of COVID-19 in [Black Hawk County](#) have been declining steadily during the past four weeks and current [CDC modeling](#) forecasts a decline in cases nationally, in Iowa, and Black Hawk County throughout October. We are seeing a similar [downward trend on campus](#) as our infection rate has now declined for the second straight week in a row and last week's positivity rate was the lowest we have seen this fall semester. Thanks to all who have been vaccinated, and we encourage those who have not to do so soon in order to keep yourself, friends, and families safe.

As we celebrate Homecoming this week please continue to watch for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and complete the [Panther Health Survey](#) if you are sick.

Vaccines and Boosters

COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. Currently those not fully vaccinated account for 85.3% of COVID-19 patients in Iowa ICUs.

As released by the CDC this week, if you initially received the **Pfizer-BioNTech** vaccine you should or may be eligible to receive a **Pfizer-BioNTech [booster](#)** as shown below:

- people **65 years and older** and residents in long-term care settings should receive at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series,
- people aged **50–64 years** with [underlying medical conditions](#) should receive at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series,
- people aged **18–49 years** with [underlying medical conditions](#) may receive at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks, and
- people aged **18-64 years** who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of **occupational or institutional setting** may receive at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their **individual benefits and risks**.

According to the CDC, data has shown the **Pfizer-BioNTech** booster can increase the immune response and as a result provide improved protection against COVID-19, including the Delta variant.

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If you initially received the **Moderna** or **Johnson & Johnson's Janssen** vaccine, the CDC is evaluating more data in order to make additional recommendations soon for populations or people who received those vaccines. Currently, COVID-19 vaccines are not interchangeable, so you should get the same product, pending recommendations and availability, for your booster. Once the Student Health Clinic finalizes the details for booster doses there will be a campus wide communication with more information.

Vaccines: Do you still need to receive your COVID-19 vaccine or finish the Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 series? Vaccines are readily available, including at the Student Health Clinic every Thursday from 1:00-3:00pm and Friday from 9:00-11:00am.

If you are looking for a vaccine off-campus, search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.

Flu Vaccine Clinics

Flu vaccine clinics will start Sept. 29 at the Rod Library from 1:30-3:30 p.m. The full schedule of flu shot clinics available throughout October, which will be held in various locations across campus, is [available online](#).

Faculty and staff are eligible for one free flu vaccine on-campus each year. For students, the Student Health Clinic will file a claim with your health insurance or charge \$30 to those students without health insurance.

Masks will be required at the on-campus vaccination clinics. Masks will be available for those that forget to bring one. UNI provides the [quadrivalent flu shot](#).

Panther Health Survey

The university is continuing to use the [Panther Health Survey](#) to assist those who are:

- Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (regardless of vaccination status);
- Have been exposed to COVID-19 and are unvaccinated; or
- Need to access COVID-19 leave.

If you fall into any of these categories please complete the survey as it helps provide relevant campus support services to those impacted by COVID-19, supports our cleaning and disinfecting efforts, and allows students to receive alternative class assignments, which are available for individual students who are unable to attend class due to COVID-related health issues. The Panther Health Survey must be completed to have faculty notified of students needing to be absent from classes. Students directed not to come to campus or who are unable to participate in class due to COVID-19

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related illness, self-isolation, or quarantine should utilize the information provided in the survey.

If you have a question, please visit forwardtogether.uni.edu or email it to forwardtogether@uni.edu. Thanks for all that you do to keep yourself, your family and the Panther community safe.

Stay Well,

John Vallentine,
Associate Provost for Faculty

Joseph Rayzor,
Director of Risk Management, Environmental Health and Safety