

2021

Forward Together Update, December 21, 2021

University of Northern Iowa

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University of Northern Iowa

Forward Together Update

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Dear Panther Community,

As we begin the winter break, it's important to consider getting your COVID-19 vaccine booster dose if you have not already done so. The Omicron variant has now been [found in Iowa and 44 other states](#). We urge you to take this new variant seriously, and remember, COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and free.

The good news is that getting your booster vaccine dose appears to offer substantial protection against this new strain of COVID-19. The CDC recommends that everyone ages 18 years and older should get a [booster shot](#) at least two months after their initial J&J/Janssen vaccine or six months after completing their primary COVID-19 vaccination series of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna.

Last week, the [CDC](#) endorsed the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and updated their recommendations expressing a clinical preference for individuals to receive an mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine over Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine. The CDC reports: "Individuals who are unable or unwilling to receive an mRNA vaccine will continue to have access to Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine."

Travel and Holiday Recommendations

Making travel and gathering decisions can be especially challenging during the pandemic. It is important to review the [CDC guidance](#) regarding Quarantine and Isolation specifics when you have been exposed or infected with the virus. The CDC provides details about [domestic](#) and [international](#) travel requirements that may be useful.

Student Health Clinic Hours

The Student Health Clinic has transitioned to winter break operations. During this time, Test Iowa's at-home test kits continue to be available in the Student Health Clinic lobby

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through December 23 and then January 3 through January 13. Normal hours will resume on January 14. Throughout winter break, individuals can continue to visit:

- [Vaccinate.iowa.gov](https://vaccinate.iowa.gov) to find a vaccine provider;
- [Coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/testing-locations](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/testing-locations) to locate COVID-19 testing, including the free at-home [Test Iowa](#) saliva kit; and
- [Test Iowa](#) to request that an at-home test kit be sent directly to your residence.

Voluntary Vaccine Verification Reminder

Employees (faculty, staff, graduate assistants and student employees) can utilize the [Panther Health Survey](#) to voluntarily submit documentation of being fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or voluntarily submit a request for a waiver or accommodation as to any potential/future COVID-19 vaccination requirement. See Forward Together's [Vaccine Verification FAQs](#) for more information.

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 (individuals who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine after an exposure unless they have [symptoms](#)); or
- Unable to report to campus for class, work or other assignments due to COVID-19.

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 and supports our cleaning and disinfecting efforts.

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