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## Forward Together Update [New CDC Guidelines], March 4, 2022

University of Northern Iowa

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# University of Northern Iowa

## Forward Together Update

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Dear Panther Community,

On Friday, February 25, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated their [guidance](#) to reflect the level of impact COVID-19 illness is having on communities and healthcare systems.

COVID-19 Community Levels have been established to allow individuals and communities to make decisions based on their local context and needs. Levels are now identified as Low, Medium or High and determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area.

**Black Hawk County** currently has a Community Level designation of Medium, where individuals at high risk for severe illness are encouraged to speak with their healthcare professional about whether they need to wear a mask and take other precautions, as well as all individuals should stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms. Furthermore, the CDC says that “people may wear a mask at any time” and “people with symptoms, a positive test or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.”

These new Community Level designations are meant to align precautions for educational settings, including higher education, with those for other community settings. Recently 85 of Iowa’s 99 counties were in the Low or Medium category, while 14 were rated as High.

COVID-19 case dashboards maintained by the state and **Black Hawk County Public Health Department** have changed to reflect the new CDC guidelines.

These new guidelines do not change the [CDC’s guidance for traveling safely](#) during the pandemic - including wearing masks on public transportation and in public transportation hubs. Please keep this in mind as you begin any spring break travel.

If you have a question, please visit [forwardtogether.uni.edu](http://forwardtogether.uni.edu) or email it to [forwardtogether@uni.edu](mailto:forwardtogether@uni.edu). Thanks for all that you do to keep yourself, your family and the Panther community safe. Your proactive efforts make a difference, which helps immensely in ensuring a successful spring semester.

Stay Well,

# University of Northern Iowa

John Vallentine,  
Associate Provost for Faculty

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