

## Boston University Chief Health Officer

**TO:** The Boston University Community

**FROM:** Dr. Judy Platt, Chief Health Officer

**DATE:** August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Important Health Information – Fall 2022

Dear Members of our Boston University Community,

I write today in anticipation of the 2022-2023 academic year and with several important public health reminders and updates as our campuses fill, and we return to a vibrant community of living and learning for the fall semester. Please read below for important information regarding COVID-19, monkeypox, and influenza.

### COVID-19

#### Your Resources for Care & Questions

Students with any COVID-related concerns should contact [Student Health Services](#) or review the Student Health Services [COVID-19 website](#). Faculty and staff with COVID-related medical concerns should contact the [Occupational Health Center](#) or review the Occupational Health Center [COVID-19 website](#). Employees with non-medical COVID-19 concerns may reach out to a representative at the Human Resources Service Center line at 617-358-4990 or via email at [covidhelp@bu.edu](mailto:covidhelp@bu.edu) on each weekday from 9am-5pm.

#### Symptomatic/Close Contact Exposure COVID-19 Testing

COVID-19 PCR [testing](#) is available for individuals who are experiencing symptoms or who have had a close contact exposure. Beginning **August 15, 2022**, all PCR testing for students and employees will be located at the Health Services Annex, located in the rear of Agganis Arena at 925 Commonwealth Avenue.

All faculty, staff, and students who need [testing](#) due to symptoms or due to being exposed to someone with COVID-19 (close contact exposure) may pick up COVID-19 self-test kits, register their test kit through their respective portals, complete the test, and drop off their specimens at the Health Services Annex from Monday through Friday 9AM-5PM. Test results will come to the portals by the end of the following business day. If you have questions about test results, symptoms or care, please contact Student Health Services (students) or the Occupational Health Center (employees).

#### Face Masks

Mask mandates will remain in effect on the BU Shuttle and in healthcare settings until further notice. At this time there is not a mask mandate in place for other locations on campus, including classrooms, however we strongly encourage the use of high-quality masks (such as N95s, KN95s, KF94s, and FFP2s) to reduce the risk of transmission in crowded settings or for individuals who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. **High-quality masks worn correctly and regularly will significantly reduce the risk of viral transmission even if others around you are not masked.**

#### On-campus Isolation

All on-campus students, regardless of living situation, will need to **isolate in place** at their assigned campus residence if they test positive for COVID-19. Whenever possible, students are strongly encouraged to return to their permanent residence by private car to complete their isolation period.

## **Vaccination and Booster Requirements**

We continue to require all BU community members to have a primary COVID-19 vaccination series as well as a **single** booster dose, within the appropriate timeframe. At this time, we do not have plans to require “second boosters” or “fourth doses,” but we encourage individuals [who meet the criteria](#) to consider an additional booster dose. We will offer Moderna COVID-19 primary series and first booster vaccinations as part of our fall immunization clinics. More details will be announced closer to the start of the Fall semester.

## **Monkeypox**

Monkeypox is a viral illness that has recently been declared a [global health emergency](#) by the World Health Organization (WHO). Symptoms of monkeypox can include fever, headache, muscle aches or backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, and exhaustion. It is often accompanied by a rash that can look like clear blisters or pimples that may appear on the face, inside the mouth, hands, feet, genitals, anus, chest or other areas. Monkeypox is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI), but it can be transmitted through close physical contact like kissing, cuddling, or sex. It can also be spread by direct contact with infectious rashes, scabs or fluids, or by touching items that have previously been touched by an infectious rash or bodily fluids (such as clothing, sheets, or towels).

Monkeypox is not a new illness. However, there is concern about the increasing number of cases across the United States and globally. Although gay, bisexual, queer men, transgender men and nonbinary people who have sex with men have recently been disproportionately affected, anyone can be infected with monkeypox regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. Current messaging about monkeypox being a “gay” illness creates stigma, perpetuates misconceptions, harms those who are most vulnerable, and prevents reaching all who are at risk.

Student Health Services (SHS) is working closely with state and local health officials to prevent, identify, and provide medical care for [monkeypox](#). For more information about monkeypox, including prevention, signs and symptoms, and treatment, please [visit the CDC website](#). Students with monkeypox symptoms or exposure should contact Student Health Services at 617-353-3575. SHS can help students get tested, treated, or find a [vaccination](#) location. Employees with monkeypox symptoms or exposure should contact their primary care provider, but can also find more information about vaccination centers [here](#). Employees who do not have a primary care provider may inquire about testing at local urgent care centers.

## **Influenza**

Based on influenza activity in other hemispheres, it is predicted that winter will bring an increase in influenza (flu) cases. While the flu vaccination is currently only required for faculty, students, and staff in clinical settings, we highly encourage everyone to get vaccinated to reduce your chances of getting the flu and minimize the severity of the illness if you do get the flu. Flu clinics for faculty, staff, and students will be available at Boston University in the fall. Please be on the lookout for communication from Student Health Services and the Occupational Health Center for further details. Wearing a well-fitted, high-quality face mask during flu season can help to significantly reduce transmission of flu, COVID-19, and other respiratory illnesses.

We will continue to monitor public health trends, both locally and on our campus, and our requirements and guidance will be updated accordingly on the Occupational Health Center and Student Health Services websites.

Thank you all for helping to keep our campuses safe and healthy,

Judy Platt, MD  
Chief Health Officer and Executive Director  
Student Health Services

