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## COVID-19\_Important Community Health Message\_March 15, 2021

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

Robert Dana

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

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## Important community health message

1 message

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UMaine President's Office <umaine.president@maine.edu>

Mon, Mar 15, 2021 at 3:03 PM

Reply-To: UMaine President's Office <umaine.president@maine.edu>

To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Dear members of the UMaine and UMM communities,

Last week, we observed the anniversary of the pandemic with great sadness, remembering all who have lost their lives due to COVID-19. We also have more optimism than we have had in a year, thanks to continued public health guidance to reduce the spread of the virus, and the availability of vaccines.

In recent weeks, we have welcomed a slowing rate of new COVID cases nationwide and in Maine compared with the winter peak period, as well as new federal vaccination expectations and future easing of civil guidance for our communities, including businesses. However, over the last week across Maine, we have had an increase in the seven-day average of [new coronavirus cases](#), with most detected in adults in their 20s.

At UMaine, we also have seen an uptick in positivity rates, the gross number of positive COVID-19 cases and the detection of the disease in wastewater on campus. This includes increases in community-based transmission of the disease.

While our spirits lift, it's important that we remain vigilant of the health and safety guidance that has successfully gotten us to this point. **We are still in a pandemic.** And we have only eight weeks to go to finish this semester, which we would like to do by continuing the in-person and campus-based instruction and activity we have been able to do this semester.

At all times, wear your face covering, maintain 6 feet of physical distancing and good hand hygiene, continue your weekly testing, and avoid large gatherings. And get vaccinated when you are eligible to do so.

In our university communities, the [Black Bears](#) and [Clippers](#) pacts still apply, and current state and University of Maine System health and safety guidance is still in effect.

The first of our four days focused on providing students time for decompression, rest, reflection, and recentering are coming up. The Reading Days, mini-break and Maine Day, March 23–24, April 15 and April 28, are meant to remain free of new assignments to provide time for students to pursue academic work that is most appropriate for them or to take the time away from their regular routine if that is what they need most.

We know some students are considering travel plans. We remind you that university-sponsored travel is still prohibited for faculty and staff in most cases. The latest UMS travel guidance is [online](#). We urge all to stay close to home and to do their part to keep this disease from spreading.

All of us are looking forward to the times when we can safely gather and to be with those we know and care about. But those times are not yet here.

No matter where this message finds you — on or off campus, in Maine or beyond — please follow health and safety guidance. We are getting through this, together, in order to be together again. Please do all you can for your own health and safety, and for the well-being of those you love and our communities.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy  
Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation

President of the University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias

Robert Dana

Vice President for Student Life and Inclusive Excellence, and Dean of Students