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## Chancellor Messages\_Unwinding from COVID-19

Dannel P. Malloy

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Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

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## Unwinding from COVID-19

1 message

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Chancellor Dannel Malloy <chancelloroffice@maine.edu>

Fri, Dec 9, 2022 at 10:02 AM

Reply-To: chancelloroffice@maine.edu

To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu



**December 9, 2022**



Season's Greetings!

There is so much to be thankful for this holiday season. Our hard work paid off in successfully limiting our exposure to COVID-19 and decreasing its impact. Systemwide, 99% of students attending in-person instructional settings are fully vaccinated along with over 94% of our full-time employees. Our achievement was further facilitated by the many employees who diligently reached out, collected information, and processed over 34,000 vaccine card uploads. These numbers speak volumes about the care and consideration of our community members toward one another. The unwinding of COVID-19 restrictions is a direct result of our success, allowing us to return to normalcy in our activities and interactions with family, friends, and neighbors that we haven't experienced in years.

The University of Maine System (UMS)—comprising our seven universities and the Maine School of Law—is also removing more of the vestiges of COVID-19. Although we are happy to leave behind many mandates such as return-to-campus testing, wastewater testing, and group size limits, three important requirements remain.

- First, we are strongly encouraging everyone to have at least their first course of COVID vaccines before classes begin in January. Students will still be required to be fully vaccinated or to have an approved exemption on file. COVID-19 vaccination and exemption reporting will be rolled into the State of Maine immunization reporting deadlines currently required for all students.
- Second, masks will continue to be required in instructional settings by default, and the

requirement can be lifted only by the instructor on a class-by-class basis. Note: Instructional settings include classrooms, labs, studios, etc.

- Third, masks will continue to be required in individual office spaces unless waived by the primary occupant or meeting host.

Although restrictions have loosened, we are still living in a pandemic, which has led all of us—students, staff, and faculty alike—to develop a robust toolkit that can be implemented at any time to keep one another safe. Our reintegration into social life has caused, in addition to an expected holiday spike in COVID-19 cases, the exceptionally high transmission rates of many illnesses from which we and our immune systems were isolated for an extended period. These include influenza and [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\)](#) which are currently circulating widely among the members of our communities. Applying the tools we have acquired during this pandemic can serve us well now. Being up to date on influenza and COVID vaccines, hand washing, staying home when sick, keeping your distance when feasible, and even wearing a mask when you feel any signs of illness are all commonsense things we can do to limit the spread of infection. In addition, we have learned the importance of our emotional well-being and have added tools to improve that as well. Managing stress levels and carving out time to do the things that ground you are just as important to physical health.

Our [Together For Maine website](#) is evolving to reflect this new normal. You can find information about mandatory student immunization and COVID vaccination reporting as well as all of the health and safety guidance—relevant whether you are a student or an employee—to fill your toolkit with options that you can manage and use as you see fit. The site includes safe travel information, optional testing and home test kit information, and links to resources such as CDC guidelines for exposure and quarantine.

I am inspired by the work that is being done at all of our universities and share feelings of pride in our students, faculty, and staff and their accomplishments. I wish you all a successful end to the semester and health and happiness in the new year.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy, Chancellor  
University of Maine System

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