

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

I hope you had a joyous and happy holiday and are looking forward to a healthy and happy New Year. As we begin 2021, let's have renewed hope for an end to the public health crisis that we have faced for most of 2020. At this time, multiple agencies are working diligently on the distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. As the first doses of this vaccine become available, it is my hope that you give serious consideration to participating in the vaccination campaign.

In early December, 2020, Midwestern University applied to become a vaccination site in both DuPage County, Illinois and in Maricopa County, Arizona. We did this with the hope of having the vaccines available for our students, faculty and staff. While our applications were submitted weeks ago, we have not had any affirmative feedback from DuPage County. Our application was accepted in Maricopa County; however, we have not yet heard when the vaccines will be available for us to administer on the Glendale Campus for our faculty, staff, students, and the local community.

The availability of COVID-19 vaccines are under the management and distribution of the local municipalities and states. These government agencies are regulating the distribution of the vaccine, not any employer, organization or individuals. Even though some of the large medical centers have already become "vaccination Point of Dispensing (POD)", the availability of vaccines is not determined by the individual hospitals. Instead, the distribution of vaccine doses is managed by the Public Health departments, utilizing the help of the National Guard and registered volunteers.

Steps you can take to pursue getting a vaccination:

COVID-19 vaccine will be rolled out in five stages across the U.S.: Phase 1A, 1B, 1C, 2, and 3. At each new phase, the distribution methods will change depending on the most effective ways of vaccinating those groups and the vaccine supply at that point. Public Health is actively working with state and local partners to facilitate agreements that will allow vaccines to be allocated for additional distribution outside of POD operations, such as pharmacies and other private providers. This will help increase access to vaccines among prioritized populations.

- If you are a student on external clinical rotation in a health care setting, please apply to get a vaccination as a member of the hospital, clinic or pharmacy staff.
- If your personal physician is a member of a larger health care group, such as the DuPage Medical Group, find out if they can put you on a patient waiting list for their practice.
- If you believe you are eligible for Phase 1A or B, complete a prescreen survey (AZ) and submit an application to receive a vaccine through the Maricopa County (AZ), Public Health website at <https://www.maricopa.gov/5647/Phase-1A>. For DuPage County (IL), please visit <https://www.dupagehealth.org/667/COVID-19-Vaccine> to review information regarding local vaccination programs.

Key Facts:

- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccinations are free. When you register for the vaccine, you may be asked about your insurance carrier, but it is only for administration charges.
- If you get a vaccination at a later date, the cost is covered by our Blue Cross Blue Shield Plans and most student plans.
- You cannot become infected after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, because the vaccine contains no live virus. Instead, the vaccine directs your body to produce a protein that teaches your body how to fight off the virus. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccinations require two injections in order to reach 90% effectiveness. The vaccine is recommended to individuals 16 and older.

Volunteering:

Our Response Committee is looking at potential opportunities for students and faculty to become trained volunteers in both Arizona and Illinois to administer the vaccines at city and county locations, after you have been vaccinated as a volunteer. Your Academic Deans will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Unfortunately, the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Arizona and Illinois. We as a community must stay diligent in our social distancing, wearing a mask at all times, and washing our hands. Even after you get the vaccination, please remember these safety policies remain in effect.

I believe 2021 will be a year of transition. We cannot forget the important lessons we learned in 2020 as we carefully navigated our way throughout the pandemic. While we are all anxious for COVID-19 to be a thing of the past, we need to be focused on where we are today, knowing that it will take time to get everyone vaccinated. Until then, I will continue to update you on the availability of the vaccine and how quickly we can further protect all of you.

Happy New Year.

Be well.

Dr. G.