

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

As we have entered a new phase of managing the COVID-19 public health crisis, Midwestern University continues with its preparation plans in order to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine to our campus community as well as the community at-large at both the Glendale, Arizona and Downers Grove, Illinois Multispecialty Clinics. Both Maricopa County and DuPage County have approved our application to be a public health partner with the local municipalities. However, we have not received any information or details as to when this will begin. In the meantime, we encourage you to register with your county. If you have an opportunity to receive your vaccine at any other distribution center, please do not hesitate to protect yourself, family and colleagues now, and do not wait for our campus-based distribution program.

We have been in regular contact with many of our hospital partners, the Public Health Department of the City of Chicago, and the Arizona Public Health Department. These organizations are requesting our support and assistance at established vaccination sites. Many volunteers are needed to help manage the many participants in the vaccination program. Most of the volunteer opportunities are helping with health care screenings, directing traffic and monitoring individuals for 15 minutes following their vaccination.

At this time, we are establishing procedures and a plan to allow students, faculty and staff to volunteer. Please be aware that there are liability considerations you need to assess prior to volunteering. Midwestern University is currently evaluating the risk of participation and reviewing all of the documents you may be asked to sign as a volunteer, and we are establishing guidelines that will allow all faculty, staff and students the vital information you need to know prior to volunteering. In addition, some of the sites are requesting participation in a training session, a criminal background check, and additional personal waivers.

While I appreciate that many of our students want to be an active participant in this vaccination program, the academic deans are carefully assessing groups of students that can be released to volunteer. However, we cannot modify the curriculum to adjust to volunteer opportunities. Students scheduled for board exams, participating in didactic classes, or who are currently on a required clinical rotations in their third and fourth year of studies cannot be released of their academic obligations until a volunteer application process is fully established, in order to ensure volunteering takes place in a coordinated and timely manner. There are various opportunities that will be presented to our students by their academic deans in the near future, once additional information is available.

We are an Institution that has a long and proud tradition of strongly supporting community service; volunteerism is encouraged, admired and represents our mission. I believe as a health care community we can play a part in bringing a healthier community together – one vaccination at a time.

Be well.

Dr. G.