Welcome back, Golden Bears! So glad to see everyone, and the energy on campus is palpable. Reminder to all, the WNE Fall 2021 COVID-19 Mitigation Plan was published last week; please take a moment to read through its content.

**Policy Updates**
Reminder to all faculty, staff, and students, WNE reinstated an indoor mask policy ([WNE Mask Policy](https://example.com)) on August 7, 2021. All incoming first-year and transfer students should familiarize themselves with the policy content. The simple graphic provides some valuable tips for all our Golden Bear community members on how to properly wear a mask.

**COVID-19 Virus Transmission Levels**

**Community Levels**
Hampden County remains rated as a HIGH level of transmission by the CDC [Data Tracker](https://example.com), with a > 5% positivity rate. Data reported as of Sun August 22- August 28, 2021.

**Campus Transmission**
WNE COVID-19 testing and positive case rates will begin to be reported in our next weekly update. Data will be inclusive for the reporting period starting August 30, 2021 and ending on Sunday, September 5, 2021.

**Vaccination Updates**

**Hampden County Vaccination Rates**
Hampden County continues to lag the rest of the state with COVID-19 vaccination rates, with only 58% of residents reported having received at least one dose of vaccine. [MA DPH Vaccination Report](https://example.com)
Vaccine Compliance (WNE)
Faculty, staff, and students were expected to have all proof of vaccinations on file with Health Services or filed an exemption by August 25, 2021. Health services are reporting a fair amount of outstanding submissions. As indicated in previous communications, effective Monday, August 30, 2021, WNE will begin to sanction faculty, staff, and students who fail to comply with COVID-19 vaccine requirements.

Faculty and staff are subject to a 45-day unpaid leave, and students will have the following actions take place:

1. No documentation by Monday, August 30, 2021: $500 non-refundable fine will be placed on your student account.
2. No documentation by Tuesday, September 7, 2021: network access will be disabled by the University.
3. No documentation by Monday, September 13, 2021: you will be suspended from the University and engage in a suspension hearing for failure to comply with the directions of University officials or individuals working in conjunction with the University. They are acting in the performance of their duties. Please be aware of the financial repercussions should you be suspended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denominator</th>
<th>Fully and Partially Vaccinated</th>
<th>Exempted</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4,367</td>
<td>3,837 (87%)</td>
<td>318 (7.2%)</td>
<td>227 (5.19%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data as reported through 8/30/2021 at 6:00p.m.

Vaccine Clinic at WNE
WNE is pleased to offer a vaccine clinic on Thursday, September 16, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A separate announcement will be going out this week communicating how you can register for the clinic if interested.

Update on Vaccine Boosters
U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) has developed a national plan on the roll out of boosters. They anticipate booster shots in the Fall of 2021, subject to the FDA conducting an independent evaluation and determination of the safety and effectiveness of a third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines and CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issuing booster dose recommendations based on a thorough review of the evidence.

HHS is prepared to offer booster shots for all Americans beginning the week of September 20 and starting 8 months after an individual's second dose. At that time, the individuals who were fully vaccinated earliest in the vaccination rollout, including many health care providers, nursing home residents, and other seniors, will likely be eligible for a booster. HHS would also begin efforts to deliver booster shots directly to residents of long-term care facilities at that time, given the distribution of vaccines to this
population early in the vaccine rollout and the continued increased risk that COVID-19 poses to them.

WNE will continue to follow these developments closely and we are anticipating a strong partnership with the MA DPH Vaccine Unit to assist in facilitating access to boosters on campus once available.

If you have questions or concerns about this weekly update, contact Health Services at Healthservices@wne.edu or 413-782-1211.

Respectfully,

Basil A. Stewart  
Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Chair, Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT)

Kathleen M. Noone  
Director, Center for Health & Wellness