Dear Members of our BU Community,

I write today as a follow-up to President Brown’s January 5th communication to provide detailed information about our new quarantine and isolation protocols, masking guidance, and the dates of our upcoming COVID-19 booster vaccination clinics. This information builds on the prior announcement on December 13th about our spring public health protocols which are in effect now.

First, I want to acknowledge the tremendous toll that the pandemic has continued to take on each and every one of us. We are in a very different stage of the pandemic now. We have life-saving vaccinations, effective treatments, and the Omicron variant has been consistently shown to cause less severe illness, particularly in those who are vaccinated and boosted. Many of our viral risk mitigation efforts will remain in place for the spring semester, however we are making some important changes that will allow us to respond to the surge of cases we will see as the pandemic evolves. We also recognize that many people will be close contacts or test positive for COVID-19 despite being vigilant over the next several weeks. We are empowering everyone with the information below so we can all be thoughtful about reducing viral transmission whenever possible.

**New Isolation and Quarantine Protocols:**

Our updated quarantine and isolation protocols will guide you through the steps to take if you are a close contact or if you test positive. It is essential that mask wearing continue for the full 10 days after a positive test or if you learn that you are a contact of someone who has tested positive.

**Isolation:**

- We are adopting the CDC guidance and shortening isolation to a minimum of 5 days. Release from isolation will be automated based on the date of your positive
test, but if you are still having symptoms you should continue to isolate until you are fever-free for 24 hours and have significant improvement in your symptoms.

• If you test positive for COVID-19, your result will be released immediately in your patient portal so that you can know if you need to isolate as soon as possible. Additional isolation messaging and instructions from Healthway will be sent directly to students through Patient Connect and to faculty and staff through our secure email platform, DataMotion with the subject “COVID Results.”

• Please note that you will no longer receive a phone call from a Healthway staff member regarding a positive test. Due to the significant number of cases during the surge we will not be performing contact tracing and we are asking positive cases to reach out to your close contacts as soon as possible and notify them of their potential exposure.
  • After you test positive, you will be removed from regular community testing for a period of 90 days from your initial positive test and you should not test during this time period unless instructed to do so by a healthcare provider.
  • After you test positive, you will not be required to receive a COVID-19 booster within the 90 day period after your positive test.

• On-campus isolation housing will be reserved for students in on-campus residential housing who share a common sleeping area. We strongly encourage students who are able to return home by a private car and safely isolate at home to do so. If we exceed our isolation housing capacity, we will allow students to isolate-in-place in their on-campus residences. Students in on-campus residential housing who have a private bedroom and students who reside off-campus will be expected to isolate-in-place at their residence and only leave for food and medical appointments.

Quarantine:

• We are also shortening close contact quarantine to 5 days. Close contacts who are eligible but have not received the booster are required to quarantine for 5 days and schedule a test 5 days after their exposure. Close contacts who have received their booster shot are not required to quarantine. Regardless of vaccination or booster status, if you develop symptoms you should schedule a test as soon as possible and minimize interactions with others.

• If you learn that you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive, please follow our updated quarantine guidance. You do not need to speak with a Healthway nurse or contact tracer and there will not be badge changes or work restrictions for quarantine status.

COVID-19 Symptomatic Testing:
• **There is no longer a need to speak with a nurse if you have COVID-19-like symptoms.** All members of our community will now be able to **self-schedule a symptomatic test** through their patient portal and present for a test at the [Health Services Annex](#) located behind Agganis Arena at 925 Commonwealth Avenue, rear entrance. Self-scheduling a test when symptoms arise is extremely important as the symptoms of Omicron can be mild and may often include headache, runny nose, and sore throat and, if you are infected there is a substantial risk of transmission to your roommates, friends, and colleagues.

• Tests collected at the Health Services Annex receive highest priority so that you will know if you need to officially isolate as soon as possible. You are encouraged to **stay home if you’re not feeling well**, even if your COVID-19 test comes back negative.

**Routine COVID-19 Community Testing:**

• Regular community testing and testing upon arrival to campus will continue to be required for all faculty, staff, affiliates, and students. Appointments should be scheduled through the patient portals.

• Faculty and staff will continue to be able to drop off their routine specimens at **any** drop-off locations across the Charles River Campus by selecting “**Drop-off Kiosk**.” There is no longer the ability or need to indicate a specific location.

• Faculty, staff, affiliates and graduate students will be required to test **once** weekly and undergraduate students will be required to test **twice** weekly.

• We are in the process of transitioning the 808 Commonwealth Avenue and the Medical Campus collection sites to **unobserved** collection sites and anticipate this transition in early February. We are developing additional locations for students to drop-off specimens and these will be announced at a later date.

**Outside Positive Test Results:**

• Please upload test results to the appropriate [student](#) or [faculty/staff](#) portal if you test positive at a site other than Boston University or test positive on a home test.

**Masking Guidance:**

• Our indoor mask mandate remains in place as an essential component to reduce the risk of viral transmission.
Our facial mask policy has been updated and provides guidance and information for our community. There are a variety of mask options available with N95s, KN95s, and KF94s offering the greatest level of protection. A comfortable and well-fitting mask that you are able to wear correctly and consistently is most important.

COVID-19 Moderna Vaccination Booster Clinics:

- You are required to upload documentation of your third dose or booster shot through Patient Connect (for students) or Occupational Health Connect (for employees), accessible through Healthway by February 4th, 2022 or as soon as you become eligible. If you were vaccinated at the Boston University Charles River Campus, you do not need to upload documentation.

- Boston University will be offering three upcoming Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster clinics on January 25th, 26th, and 27th for BU students, staff, and faculty who are 18 years or older and meet any of the following criteria:
  - Received a primary series of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at least five months prior
  - Received a primary series of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at least five months prior
  - Received a primary dose of Janssen (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine two months prior

Please see our Back2BU website for more information about all aspects of our COVID-19 protocols. Faculty and staff with non-medical concerns should email: covidhelp@bu.edu. Students with non-medical concerns should email: healthwayhelp@bu.edu.

Thank you all for your continued collaboration in keeping our campus safe,

Judy Platt, MD
Chief Health Officer
Executive Director of Student Health Services
Boston University