

**From:** [LCOM Office of the Dean](#)  
**To:** [Gilwee, Vicki M](#)  
**Subject:** Message from the Office of the Dean: COVID Response  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 8:06:20 AM

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Dear Larner Community,

The United States has averaged over 100,000 COVID-19 daily cases since early August, with more than 40 million cases and 650,000 deaths since the pandemic began. By working together, Vermont has done extremely well against the pandemic, and UVM has provided nationally recognized leadership in keeping our campus community [safe](#).

In Vermont, we continue to have high levels of community spread of COVID-19, as defined by the CDC. Despite our success, the delta variant remains a highly contagious threat, with persistent and substantial daily numbers of infections. While we hope this will plateau soon, we cannot predict exactly when. In the meantime, we must continue to work together, using evidence-based prevention strategies, to protect ourselves and our Larner community.

Vaccination against COVID-19 remains our best primary line of defense. Universal masking (for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals) in indoor spaces provides an additional level of protection. The evidence behind this is compelling, summarized well in a [JAMA Editorial](#). The benefit of universal masking in indoor settings is that **everyone** is more protected when **everyone** is masked.

UVM has provided detailed [guidance](#) for our continued campus health and safety, based on the best available science. We would also encourage you to follow these same precautions when off campus and in the community. The length of the pandemic has been hard to endure, but we know that our success is not a coincidence. Our collective efforts to follow the best public health science has protected us and those we live and work with.

We want to thank our students, staff, and faculty for their continued vigilance to protect our Larner community.

Sincerely,

Jan K. Carney, M.D., M.P.H.  
Associate Dean for Public Health & Health Policy

Richard L. Page, M.D.  
Dean

