



**COVID Vaccination FDA Approval  
COUGARCARE  
Announcement to the University Community**

**August 27, 2021**

As we prepare for the start of the Fall 2021 semester, and in light of recent events, it is important to update the community once again regarding where we stand with COVID-19. This remains a fluid and evolving situation, so please expect more communication as we continue through the semester.

As many of you are aware, the Pfizer vaccine has received final approval from the FDA for active immunization in individuals 16 years of age and older to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

We are extremely appreciative of those in our community who have already been vaccinated. Vaccination is the number one prevention strategy for the spread of COVID-19. Thank you! The University will continue its work toward a fully vaccinated community. Vaccination is strongly advised by all leading medical and government officials. We have done very well so far, and there is still opportunity to help protect ourselves and our fellow students and colleagues by being vaccinated.

Since vaccines became available, the University has strongly encouraged everyone to be vaccinated. In June, the University announced that once the FDA granted final approval for one of the vaccines, the University would require everyone on both the Pittsburgh and Dallas campuses to be vaccinated within a 45-day target range from approval.

As a result of the relatively early announcement from the FDA this week, the University has established an extended timeline for vaccination expectations for the fall semester. The timeline has been extended beyond the 45 days to allow for as many individuals as possible to be vaccinated and to avoid a deadline that would interrupt a full semester of study for students.

- If you are not already vaccinated, please plan to be vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccinations are widely available in the community and other areas. Individuals can find vaccination sites through [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov).
- The University will establish vaccination opportunities on campus via a clinic or near campus with local providers during September.
- All students, faculty, and staff who are physically present on campus should submit their proof of vaccination as soon as possible or prior to **November 1**. Employees should

email their vaccination card to [Human Resources](#). Students should upload their card to the Medica system.

- If you are applying for a medical or religious waiver, you must do so as soon as the information is available so that your application can be processed prior to **November 1**. Information on requesting medical or religious exemptions will be forthcoming. Community members who have been granted a medical or religious exemption will be required to follow the mitigation protocols put in place that may include continued masking and regular surveillance testing.
- It is hoped that all will be vaccinated or have documented medical or religious waivers in place by November 1. The University may take additional steps between November 1 and January 3, 2022 with the overall health and safety of campus in mind for those who have not provided documentation of vaccination.

Any student who has not reported their vaccination status by November 1 will have to register for classes after the normal class registration period of November 10-17.

Students and employees who are not vaccinated as of November 1 will participate in on-going surveillance testing.

Anyone not vaccinated after January 3, 2022 will put themselves in a position whereby they are subject to additional actions, including dismissal.

The University will work to provide information via the Health and Wellness Center, the CDC, the PA Department of Health, or local health officials on the safety and effectiveness of COVID vaccination.

More information will follow in the coming weeks through the COUGARCARE Updates.

It is important we work together to become a vaccinated community and protect the vulnerable among us. Even with the latest reporting of the challenges with the new variants and reports of breakthrough cases, vaccination remains the best way to protect yourself from severe illness or the possibility of long-term effects from a COVID infection.

Thank you for all you are doing on behalf of yourselves and Misericordia University.