



October 15, 2021

Dear faculty, staff, and students,

Many of you may have seen the recent news stories that COVID-19 cases are declining in South Carolina. The rate of fully vaccinated residents in Spartanburg County has risen to 52.7%, and the drop in COVID-19 hospitalizations has allowed Spartanburg Regional to resume some elective surgeries. While this is encouraging news, medical professionals caution that it's too early to see a trend yet, and rates of COVID-19 in Spartanburg County remain high right now. As Dr. Brannon Traxler, the director of public health for DHEC, noted recently, cases and hospitalizations have frequently jumped back up after a decline, and it's unknown if new, more contagious variants will emerge this winter.

I therefore urge you to get vaccinated if you have not already, and get tested any time you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19. Our Health Services department has made this easy by offering free testing every Tuesday, and hosting periodic vaccine clinics. Please take advantage of these services – vaccines remain the most effective way to keep yourself and others safe.

### **Health Services**

The next Testing Tuesday will be from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 19 on the second floor of the Spartan Rec Center. These are free PCR saliva tests, and results are typically available within 24 hours. If you feel sick, or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please call Health Services at 864-503-5191 to report and arrange testing immediately.

Next week, Health Services will offer Moderna and Pfizer vaccine clinics. If you are unvaccinated, starting the vaccine series next week will allow you to get both doses by Thanksgiving, and be fully vaccinated by finals week. Yesterday, the FDA Advisory Panel endorsed Moderna booster vaccines for high-risk populations. Health Services is requesting those who are fully vaccinated with Moderna, and are 65 or older or at increased medical risk, to complete the Moderna pre-registration form [here](#) if they would like to get a booster next week. Moderna booster vaccines would be given subject to final FDA approval. You can pre-register for the Oct. 22 Pfizer clinic [here](#).

Congratulations to our recent Vax UP winners: students Viddhi Kerai, Sarah Allison, Patrick Mead, Jordan Smith, Melody Jenkins, Aaron Edwards, Summer Johnson, Za'Cairiah Hoke, Zach

Reifschneider, Kendall Lynah, Brandon Mercado, Stefany Martinez-Zelaya, and Kayse Cardona, and faculty/staff members Tammy Cash, Scott Tanner, Mohamed Djerdjouri, and Heidi Montes. Prizewinners will be announced on a biweekly basis moving forward.

### **Academic Affairs**

A reminder that Provost Schechter is available to answer any faculty questions or concerns related to COVID-19.

### **Facilities**

Our facilities department has received its shipment of 25 portable HEPA filter units, and will begin placing them in select classrooms next week to help with air filtration.

Thank you for your continued vigilance and care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bennie L. Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Bennie L. Harris  
Chancellor

**University of South Carolina Upstate**  
800 University Way | Spartanburg, SC 29303

***Up* is where we live.**