



NORTHERN

SPRING 2022 COVID-19 FRAMEWORK

Last Updated: 1/10/22

ASSUMPTIONS:

- COVID-19, like influenza, is a contagious respiratory illness (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>) that requires reasonable and sound efforts to minimize spread and negative impacts to members of our community, university programs, and operations.
- Prepare to convert the COVID-19 website, post main page conversion, to a Ready.Northern.edu website signaling the next transition in our COVID-19 response and modeled on www.Ready.gov.¹ Spring 2022 will likely be the last semester a COVID-19 tracker will be maintained.
- Justin Fraase and Sean Blackburn will oversee the prolonged mitigation of all health concerns with widespread impacts on campus.

ENCOURAGING VACCINATIONS:

- A campus-wide vaccination campaign based upon CDC guidance will launch the first week of spring 2022:
 - **Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are effective.**
“COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from COVID-19, especially severe illness and death. COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are effective at keeping you from getting COVID-19. Learn more about the [benefits of getting vaccinated.](#)”
 - **Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are safe.**
“Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, and these vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe. COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. Learn more to [bust myths and learn the facts about COVID-19 vaccines.](#)”
 - **No, COVID-19 vaccines will not make you infertile.**
“Currently no evidence shows that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems (problems trying to get pregnant) in women or men. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines and people who would like to have a baby.](#)”
 - **No, COVID-19 vaccine will not alter your DNA.**
“COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. Both mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines deliver instructions (genetic material) to our cells to start building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. However, the material never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. Learn more about [mRNA](#) and [viral vector](#) COVID-19 vaccines.”
 - **No, having had COVID-19 is not sufficient protection from getting COVID-19 again.**
“Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 because: Research has not yet shown how long you are protected from getting COVID-19 again after you recover from COVID-19. Vaccination helps protect you even if you’ve already had COVID-19. Evidence is emerging that people **get better protection by being fully vaccinated** compared with having had COVID-19. [One study](#) showed that unvaccinated people who already had COVID-19 are more than 2 times as likely than fully vaccinated people to get COVID-19 again.” <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

COORDINATION:

- Continue to offer medical partners COVID-19 testing or vaccination clinic support on campus free of charge.
- Steele Hall will remain in reserve should isolation housing become necessary during the spring semester.
- Per Avera St. Luke’s, face coverings will still be required in Avera Student Health until further notice (adequate disposable masks have been acquired).

COMMUNICATION:

- Sean Blackburn will vet and seek feedback from Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Staff Council Working Group, and the Student Affairs Council.
- Faculty and Staff communication early Spring 2022 articulating key elements of our spring plan.
- Enhanced Avera Student Health website to help students connect to more health care resources.

RESOURCES:

- **NEW:** Thanks to the South Dakota Department of Health, free over the counter COVID-19 tests will be available throughout campus for any faculty, staff, or student and household members who would like to test at home for COVID-19. (Limit two per person, per semester). Students, faculty, and staff should report results to Student Affairs or HR as indicated under "COVID-19 POSITIVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS".
- \$5,000 of HEERF funding will be set aside for communications, a Steele Hall Food Pantry, support for any on-campus COVID-19 clinics (should they be possible), incentives for students, etc.
- \$50,000 of HEERF funding will be set aside for Athletics testing support should state resources not be sufficient.
- Avera Student Health will offer symptomatic students, including symptomatic unvaccinated athletes, free COVID-19 testing M-F, 8:30am to 3:30pm.
- Free face masks and hand sanitizer will continue to be available in Student Affairs.

ATHLETICS:

- Coaches and the Sanford team will continue to encourage athletes to get vaccinated.
- We expect to need additional weekly testing resources for the spring semester for unvaccinated athletes. We will work with SD DOH, Sanford, or other partners to acquire as needed. (HEERF Funds as necessary.)
- We will carefully monitor NSIC planning and NCAA guidelines and adjust to changes, as necessary.

ACADEMICS:

- The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is offering a yearlong HyFlex Certification Program. 10 select faculty will teach HyFlex in the Spring 2022 semester.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS:

- Will support a campus-wide campaign (posters, e-mails, social media, digital signage) to encourage vaccination. Student organizations and leaders may be recruited to help lead a student driven campaign.

COVID-19 POSITIVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

- Human Resources will continue to receive reports and monitor cases of employees who test positive for COVID-19. Faculty and staff who become ill should work with their direct supervisors to work from home or take sick leave. Student Affairs will continue to receive reports and monitor cases of students who test positive for COVID-19. Students should reach out to their respective faculty directly regarding classwork. Students should report positive tests to https://northern.formstack.com/forms/covid19_report_form_fall_2021_encrypted.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING:

- On-going monitoring of SD DOH case data (<https://doh.sd.gov/COVID/Dashboard.aspx>), and continued communication and coordination with Brown County Emergency Management, Avera St. Luke's, and Sanford Health.
 - Executive Leadership will respond to changes in Brown County infection rates with the least restrictive and disruptive interventions necessary to protect the health of the community. Options may include delayed or canceled large gatherings, limited visitation in the residence halls, restricted visitation on campus, grab and go only options in the Wolves Den, face covering and social distancing promotions, temporary limitations on in-person group projects, and mass test events.
1. "Launched in February 2003, Ready[.gov] is a National public service campaign designed to educate and empower the American people to prepare for, respond to and mitigate emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters. **The goal of the campaign is to promote preparedness through public involvement.**"