



# TheChicagoSchool<sup>®</sup>

## of Professional Psychology

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Honoring Our Past. Envisioning Our Future.

May 25, 2021

## COVID-19 Vaccine

Dear Students:

As always, I hope my email finds you all healthy and well. There certainly has been an increasing amount of good news as communities fight back against COVID-19. Just these past weeks here in California, we have seen a jump in optimism as new infections and related deaths steadily decline. Many US states are now achieving similar outcomes. In addition, we are hearing news every day of employees and students receiving the vaccine that is now widely available. We are seeing more and more individuals returning to use our ground campuses, and there is a swelling of energy and positivity because of being back together again.

If you have not yet resumed use of our facilities, please be assured that we are actively in the process of welcoming individuals back to do so as we ready ourselves for a fully in-person Fall Semester at our ground campuses. Since announcing our decision to return to in-person instruction at our ground campus locations, questions have come forward about the role of the COVID-19 vaccine, its importance in helping us safely return to campus, and the critical role that each and every one of us play in improving the well-being of our communities. While we do not yet have all the answers, what follows is the start of a series of communications I will send across the summer as we obtain answers and navigate these uncharted territories together.

To start, we know the threat of COVID-19 will not completely disappear before our return. Yet, we now also understand that the COVID-19 vaccines are effective at reducing the spread of the virus, as well as preventing serious illness and death. When used in combination with other COVID-19 public health prevention measures, vaccines provide significant protection against the virus. **For these reasons, it is clear a fully vaccinated community is the best way to reduce and eventually eliminate restrictions on our campuses. While it is not mandatory at this time, we strongly encourage all students, faculty, and staff to get vaccinated as soon as they can so they may be fully vaccinated before the start of the Fall Semester.** While The Chicago School is not currently mandating vaccination, we may revisit that decision in the coming months. We are actively monitoring the situation, including evolving guidance from various health departments as well as pending full approval processes for vaccinations through the FDA. We will share updated guidance and policies as soon as possible to give our campus community time to prepare.

Many of you who are providing essential services as part of your professional lives and educational journey have reached out with questions about vaccine requirements. Thank you for your questions

and the opportunity to provide clarity, to the best of our up to date knowledge. At TCSPP, we have an unwavering responsibility to follow public health recommendations and ensure the health and welfare of our community. For your convenience, we have included information below about where and how to obtain a vaccine in your community.

- General Information on COVID-19 vaccines – <https://www.vaccines.gov/>

Additionally, some training sites for practicum and/or internship are requiring that students obtain the vaccine to engage in a training experience at their site. Students must follow the requirements of the site in order to maintain their eligibility for training. We encourage you to reach out to your health care provider if you have medical questions related to the vaccine. If you have any concerns regarding your site's policy regarding COVID-19 vaccines, please contact your Director of Clinical Training for consultation.

Lastly, we have received a number of questions about returning to campus from our international students who are not in country. We are actively monitoring health and safety guidelines for students who must now travel to the United States. Information on this front is rapidly evolving and highly variable. As such, we are handling each of our international students' needs on an individual basis. If you are an international student and have questions, please contact your Designated School Official (DSO) and they will follow up on your behalf to obtain answers.

I cannot emphasize enough how important the process of vaccination is for every one of us. All individuals in the U.S., 12 years of age and older are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. More than 120 million U.S. residents are fully vaccinated and recent data indicates that the vaccines protect those inoculated from serious infection, protect against asymptomatic infection, and reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to others. We will continue to monitor CDC and local guidelines as well as information from the FDA regarding full approval of the current COVID-19 vaccines and keep you informed accordingly. In the meantime, it is my sincere wish out of concern for the health and wellbeing of our community, that you all seize the opportunity to get vaccinated.

Sincerely,  
Michele

Michele Nealon, Psy.D.  
President

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