

COVID-19 Vaccine:

An Open Letter to Our California University Communities

To: Our students, faculty colleagues, and all others who help make our universities some of the greatest purveyors of knowledge in the world.

Who We Are

We are deans, directors and chairs at schools and programs of public health in public and private California universities. We are trained scholars and scientists from a variety of health-related disciplines. We share a mission of improving public health. Some of us are physicians.

As members of the California university community, we urge you to take an authorized COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to you.

Why You Should Get the Vaccine

- Over 3.4 million COVID-19 cases have been diagnosed in California, over 27 million across the United States. Over 44,000 people in California have died during the pandemic. Safe and effective vaccines are the best and only way to fully defeat the virus and end the pandemic.
- The COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have been proven safe and highly effective. By combining widespread vaccination with effective implementation of public health measures, testing and treatment, we can return our communities to normal life as quickly as possible.
- The more people get vaccinated, the greater the “herd immunity” that will keep the virus from spreading. Research tells us, and Dr. Fauci reminds us, that to achieve herd immunity a large majority of the population must be vaccinated.
- We recognize that many students may feel they are young and healthy and not likely to get a serious case of COVID-19. This may be true for many. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that over 22% of recorded cases have been in the 18-29 year old group, the highest percentage of any age group. And young adults are likely to pass the virus on to others – friends, parents, grandparents – due to ongoing social interactions and congregate living situations. These friends and relatives might get much more serious, even fatal cases.

Vaccine Safety Information

- The reviews that a vaccination must undergo – even for emergency use – are extremely rigorous. There are multiple reviews by government agencies, including the FDA and the CDC, and by independent panels of medical researchers and scientists.
- Although this is the first time this type of vaccine has been approved for emergency use authorization, the science behind this type of vaccine goes back 30 years.
- We understand that some are concerned about both the short-term and long-term effects of vaccinations. But clinical trials for vaccines produced by pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna and authorized by the FDA reveal that the likelihood of severe side effects is extremely rare. To make certain this remains the case, data will continue to be collected for two years after a vaccine is first administered. It should also be noted that you cannot contract COVID-19 from getting the vaccination.

Follow the Research and the Science

- Rather than science and evidence, the case against vaccines is based on fear and misinformation. Over the years, there have been multiple peer-reviewed studies of vaccines. Some have focused on specific vaccines for specific diseases; others have reviewed the safety and effectiveness of vaccines as a whole. These studies have been produced by many of the nation's most respected schools of public health, medical schools, research institutions, and foundations.

The evidence from these studies leads to the same conclusions: authorized vaccines are safe and effective. For the great majority of the population, the benefits, --including life-saving benefits-- of getting vaccinated clearly outweigh any potential risks of doing so.

Please join us by doing your part; for yourself, your family, your fellow students, and our entire community:

Get vaccinated