

COVID Research Update Email – May 14, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

About three weeks ago, I became fully immunized. In doing so, I joined the majority of the staff, learners and faculty here at the medical center.

I've read recently that the United States as a whole is unlikely to achieve herd immunity. I feel sad about that, because of the lives that will be lost and the suffering that could be prevented.

I feel better when I think about the little bubble that is this medical center. We surely CAN (and will) achieve overall herd immunity here.

So we're continuing to strongly encourage ALL members of our URMC community to get vaccinated. It is the single most important thing we can do to keep one another safe. (Here's a helpful [FAQ on vaccination](#).)

There's another practical benefit, which is that as vaccination rates within URMC rise, it should become possible to relax or modify some of our current workplace regulations around COVID. That moment isn't now, but it is coming. Possibly as soon as mid-summer.

Finally, I want to reflect for a moment on the fact that most people on Earth do not have the same access to vaccines that we do. As a result, there are huge current surges of COVID in South America and in India.

Many members of our medical center community have loved ones and family in these countries. They may be dealing with anxiety and concern, and they need our support*.

Mary Oliver wrote: "This is the first, the wildest and the wisest thing I know: that the soul exists and is built entirely out of attentiveness."

Let us always try to be attentive to one another, and to this community we share.

Steve Dewhurst, PhD

Vice Dean for Research

***Support Services/Resources**

We know that some members of our research community continue to experience difficulties due to the pandemic. Learners who are struggling may reach out to [GEPA](#), their supervisor, program director, or coordinator for additional support. Students and employees can also use the following resources:

- If you see someone else who is really struggling, contact the [CARE Network](#). A member of the CARE staff will then reach out to this person and offer them a supportive conversation. Anyone can [submit a referral](#).

- Students can reach out to the [University Counseling Center](#) and check out [COVID Coping and Resources](#), a site run by University Health Service.
- Employees can contact the [UR Medicine Employee Assistance Program](#), one of several [support services for faculty, postdocs and staff](#).
- If you have any concerns about safety compliance or other issues related to work, please email research_covid_concerns@urmc.rochester.edu.