

*Hello Colleagues,*

It's hard to believe we're a month into the Spring semester already. Thank you for everything that you're doing to assist our students during these unusual times. I know it's not easy, especially now when winter weather unfairly impacts your syllabus or project calendar and we, as a nation, remain in the midst of a pandemic.

Despite headlines noting the decline in cases in our region over the last 14 days (Allegany County is down by 64%, Bedford County by 47%, and Somerset County by 44%), lives are continuing to be lost. We are situated in a "very high risk" region despite declines in case numbers.

Please remain vigilant to reduce the spread of this deadly disease. Wear a mask. Stay six feet apart. Avoid crowds.

## **MASKS**

The CDC offered new guidance concerning mask wearing, including a recommendation to wear two masks (a disposable mask underneath a cloth masked). Additional [CDC advice](#) includes the following:

Improve How Your Mask Protects You: When choosing a mask, look at how well it fits, how well it filters the air, and how many layers it has. Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face. Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask. Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out. A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.

Types of Masks: There are many types of masks you can use to protect yourself and others from getting and spreading COVID-19. Cloth masks can be made from a variety of fabrics, and many types of cloth masks are available. Do not wear cloth masks with exhalation valves or vents, single layer or masks made of thin fabric that don't block light. Disposable face masks are widely available. Do not wear disposable masks with gaps around the sides of the face or nose, or if wet or dirty.

## **VACCINATIONS**

COVID-19 vaccines are becoming more available in our community. They are safe, effective, and authorized for use by our country's leading medical experts. They're also our best chance to end the pandemic. *When it's your turn, I encourage you to get vaccinated to protect yourself, your loved ones, and our community.*

If you haven't already, [sign up](#) through the Allegany County Health Department to be considered for the COVID vaccine. Additional information about booking vaccination appointments at places like Walgreens, Martins, CVS, and other businesses is available through your state's COVID resource website.

## **KUDOS TO NURSING**

We've been notified by RegisteredNursing.org that our nursing program has been ranked among the top 10 accredited RN programs in the Commonwealth of [Pennsylvania](#) and the State of [Maryland](#) for 2021. We were ranked #8 in Pennsylvania and #7 in Maryland.

## **REACH OUT**

Please know that I am grateful for all that you do (and continue to do) for our students. In our ACM family, your contributions matter. We know this pandemic and the demands it places on employees in higher education are unwieldy at times. The pandemic wears on everyone in different ways. If you need additional support during these trying times or have any questions or concerns, please reach out to HR, your supervisor, or my office.

With gratitude for you,

Dr. B.