



Dear USA Members,

Many of you have already read the message sent out this morning by Vice Chancellor Bill Brady and Provost John McCarthy mandating booster shots for faculty and staff. A similar message was sent to all students on 12/1/21. Many members, including USA officers and bargaining team members were left with more questions than answers because so few details were shared.

Although the Administration is not obligated to share with the unions all-member messages in advance it is of great concern that they sent this prior to bargaining the details. Our agreement regarding vaccinations and boosters specifically states that the union and the Administration will engage around the details of the implementation of boosters. USA and other unions have a meeting scheduled for tomorrow to complete those discussions. Messages such as the one sent today cause much confusion and do nothing to build appropriate or respectful labor relations.

Nonetheless, this mandate was not unexpected, and comes following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendation November 30 that anyone older than 18 should get a booster. The booster dose requirement was hammered out by USA, PSU and UMass over the summer as part of the larger agreement over vaccination. The agreement proactively addressed working conditions, including employee health and safety concerns, in anticipation of a fall semester with full student capacity.

Our members are eligible to receive release time to get their booster shot and are entitled to time off due to any vaccination side effects.

Members who were previously granted exemptions from vaccinations for medical or religious reasons will continue to be required to test twice weekly during the spring semester.

Faculty and students must also get a COVID-19 vaccine booster.

Your eligibility for a booster starts six months after a second Moderna or Pfizer shot or two months after a Johnson and Johnson vaccination.

You can make an appointment to get a vaccine booster by identifying a location through the Massachusetts COVID-19 vaccine finder or [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov). Starting in January, you can book an appointment for a booster shot at the campus Public Health Promotion Center. No appointments are available for the rest of the semester.

I will send out a message with further details about the mandate following our discussions with the administration .

Respectfully,

Leslie Marsland

*Leslie Marsland, President
University Staff Association
University of Massachusetts
108 Hampshire House
Amherst, MA 01003*