

## PFT COVID Update 12-1-21: Omicron – Boosters Expanded – Mask Mandate - Links

Dear Dan:

### **Here Today. Omicron Tomorrow.**

It seems like only yesterday we were reporting on the slow but measurable waning of the COVID-19 Delta variant.

As widely cautioned by virologists however, several new variants have emerged to potentially replace Delta as the dominant variant of the Coronavirus. The most recent variant of global interest — Omicron — is currently wreaking minor havoc across political, societal and financial landscapes.

From what we've seen in our review of available up-to-date information, we believe that speculation is getting a little ahead of what the facts are about where we stand today with Omicron, as well as where we will stand tomorrow once scientists learn more about this variant.

*Hopefully what follows will help clarify what we're up against.*

First and foremost, what is most reassuring at this juncture is that we all actually know what to do when faced with a new variant or uptick in cases locally: Get vaccinated if you can. Booster up when you are eligible. Practice common sense social distancing. Avoid large crowds. Wash your hands frequently. Mask up in public.

**To help with the current state of Omicron confusion and concern, we found a comprehensive Q & A article** that relies on sensibility rather than sensationalism. And while we are not always a fan of *Buzzfeed*—we think these answers will help to allay your fears and set realistic expectations about what might come next with Omicron.

**[Please click here to read the full article.](#)**

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### **Booster Boost By The CDC.**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strengthened recommendations for booster doses of coronavirus vaccine Monday, saying all adults should get boosted six months after the second dose of Pfizer/BioNTech's or Moderna's vaccine, or two months after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

**That means all adults over the age of 18 eligible for boosters should schedule an appointment to get one as soon as possible. [Click here to find a vaccine provider nearest](#)**

[you.](#)

What's more, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky emphasized the importance of aggressive vaccination and booster scheduling in the face of a potentially troublesome new variant (*Omicron* —see *above*); all while reinforcing the preventative measures that have proven to help mitigate the spread of, and infection by, COVID-19.

“... to stop the spread of COVID-19 we need to follow the prevention strategies we know work. These include vaccination, wearing masks, improving ventilation indoors and keeping a distance from others, especially if they are unvaccinated.” --  
Dr. Rochelle Walensky

[Click here to read the entire article from WTAE.](#)

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## **PA Mask Mandate Extended Until At Least December 8th.**

On Tuesday, November 30th, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania reinstated the administration's mandate requiring students, teachers and staff to wear face masks — a temporary action that should be resolved on December 8th when the court hears arguments on the matter.

No matter what the outcome, Governor Wolf has announced that school districts will be permitted to modify or end the mask mandate for K-12 students on January 17, 2022.

How far the administration can go via executive fiat in the interest of public health remains to be seen in many respects. Learn more about the issue by reading the [full PennLive article here.](#)

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## **Information Links That Bear Repeating:**

Below please find additional links providing helpful information you can bookmark and count on as the COVID-19 situation changes and evolves.

[AFT/AFTPA Coronavirus Resources & Updates for Members](#)

[Find a Vaccine Provider Near You](#)

[AFT/PFT Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)

-- A Negotiated, Free Benefit to Members

[Click for EAP Information Flyer](#) (*includes login info*)

[Click for Life Skills Solutions Website](#) (*login upper right*)

[AFT Share My Lesson Stress Management Resources](#) (*searchable*)

[Download the PA COVID-Alert Tracking App](#)

[National Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) Coronavirus Resources](#)

[CDC Data Tracking Page](#)

[CDC Vaccine Information Landing Page](#)

[PPS Coronavirus Resources and Links](#)

[PA Department of Health Coronavirus Resources](#)

[PA-Specific Resources from Senator Casey](#)

[Student Debt Relief Resources](#)

[Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) Rumor Control](#)

[Coronavirus Testing Locations \(view interactive map mid page\)](#)

**\*\* PFT Coronavirus Updates Released Periodically As Needed \*\***

Missed an update or message? [View our archive of COVID-19 Updates here](#).

**Please keep in touch—keep sharing your ideas, your questions and your concerns.**

**In solidarity—**

**Dan Evans**

**PFT Communications Director**

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