

## PFT COVID Update 2-9-22: Boosters - Mask Mandates - Randi Weighs In - Links

# CORONAVIRUS



## Updates

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Dear Dan:

### **The Importance of Booster Shots & What's Being Lost In Translation.**

From a caseload perspective, the Omicron surge is reaching a plateau or diminishing in multiple states across the nation (*and equally important, in most geographical regions*), and while this is a cause for cautious optimism, it's important to remember that we're not out of the pandemic woods.

Not when America is still averaging nearly 2,500 deaths per day due to Covid-related complications; and not with our nation now beyond the nearly unimaginable mark of 900,000 American deaths due to Coronavirus.

If there's an emerging, repeated theme—it is that the challenge that remains does so largely in the cohort of Americans who have yet to be fully vaccinated (*if at all*), or fully boosted.

As you will see in the first article in the [February 7th NY Times newsletter seen here](#), there is an emerging subset of people of all ages and stripes who are ignoring or downplaying the need for booster shots when eligible. And ignoring them despite strong evidence that boosters are helping to spare lives and prevent more severe illnesses

There's no one reason people are ignoring or delaying booster shots—but sadly, those reasons have had a negative affect on both our caseload and our death rate.

*That the reasons themselves vary, and are not political in nature, makes the [Times Newsletter](#) particularly interesting.*

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### **Mask Mandates: The Beginning of The End?**

A pressing national question seems to be not “if” mask mandates are coming to an end, but rather, “when?”

One thing for certain is that mask mandates will not be uniformly or simultaneously lifted or enforced nationwide. That's why it is important to be aware of transmission rates and case counts in your own particular geographic area. (*In this effort, the [PA Department of Health Coronavirus Dashboard](#) is your friend!*)

The discussion about lifting mask mandates remains contentious, with many experts citing a lag in vaccination rates among the school-age population as a reason to not prematurely end mandates.

“Currently, 22.6% of Americans ages 5 to 11 and 56.4% of those ages 12 to 17 are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.” -- ABC News/CDC

[A recent ABC News story takes a closer look at the issue—click here to view/read.](#)

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## **AFT President Randi Weingarten Urges Science Based Masking Decisions.**

The AFT President took to the airwaves this week and demonstrated again how far ahead the AFT has been on encouraging science-based decision-making throughout the entirety of the pandemic.

### **Randi's Mask Factors ....**

1. Number of people vaccinated
2. Community spread
3. Spread in schools
4. Hospitalization rates
5. Adequate ventilation & mitigation in place

**The media below says more than we ever could**—take a moment to read (and see) Randi in action as she calls on the CDC for updated mask guidance, and more.

[NBC news article and interview](#)

[Twitter/Interview with NBC's Zerlina Maxwell](#)

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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 \(view interactive map mid page\)](#)



### Coronavirus Self-Checker

A guide to help you make decisions and seek appropriate medical care

**\*\* 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**