

January 12, 2022

COVID-19 Health System Updates, January 12

You may have seen in the news that New York State is about to begin requiring health care workers to get COVID-19 booster shots. We are waiting for more guidance from the New York State Department of Health and then will put together a plan for the Health System.

Booster shots are the best protection we currently have against the Omicron variant. I know that many of you have gotten your booster dose, and I'm grateful for that.

If you've already had your booster, please be sure to report it to Employee Health Services (EHS) if you haven't already done so. You can report it [here](#). You can either give EHS permission to access your vaccine record in Epic if you were vaccinated at Mount Sinai, or upload a picture of your vaccination card if you received the booster elsewhere. You must report your booster shot even if you got it at Mount Sinai.

If you haven't yet had a booster shot and are currently eligible, you should get it as soon as possible. You're considered eligible for a booster shot five months after your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two months after your one dose of Johnson & Johnson. You can book an appointment [through Mount Sinai](#), or check the [New York State](#), [New York City](#), [New Jersey](#), or [Connecticut](#) websites for other locations.

If you recently had COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says you can get a booster shot as soon as 10 days after you first tested positive or began having symptoms, whichever is earlier.

Like the original vaccine mandate, this new requirement is intended to help keep us and our patients safe. As I've mentioned before, the CDC now [recommends](#) that all Americans ages 12 and over get a booster shot once eligible.

What Else to Do to Stay Safe

I know many of you are wondering what else you can do to stay safe, and in a new *Mount Sinai Today* [article](#) and [video](#), Bernard Camins, MD, Medical Director for Infection Prevention, has some useful suggestions for public transportation, kids at school, and how to choose the right mask. Most of the advice is similar to that given for other variants of COVID-19, but do consider upgrading your mask.

Some Hopeful Signs in the Numbers

As of this morning, we had 883 inpatients with COVID-19 across the system, 97 of whom were in critical care. The New York State seven-day average test positivity rates as of yesterday were 20.1 percent for New York City, 25.1 percent for Long Island, and 22.0 percent for the mid-Hudson region.

The test positivity rates and some other indicators we watch appear to have stabilized in the last few days. For example, the number of staff out sick because of COVID-19 is no longer increasing, as it was earlier in the month. It's too early to draw conclusions, but these are hopeful signs; if the Omicron wave is cresting, this is where we would see it first. Hospitalizations typically stay high for several weeks after cases peak, but we expect both numbers to be headed downward by February.

Some of you have asked for more detail in the numbers. Here are the hospital-by-hospital inpatient numbers as of 9 am today:

Hospital	Total Cases	ICU Cases
The Mount Sinai Hospital	268	31
Mount Sinai Morningside	136	17
Mount Sinai West	89	8
Mount Sinai Beth Israel	99	10
Mount Sinai Brooklyn	106	12
Mount Sinai South Nassau	105	11
Mount Sinai Queens	80	8

Reminder About Asymptomatic Testing

A reminder that we continue to offer free PCR testing for asymptomatic employees; the latest schedules are always posted [here](#). Please note that the CDC does not recommend PCR testing for anyone who has tested positive in the past 90 days, as you can continue to test positive even though you are no longer infectious.

Parking Permits Valid Again

If you had one of those New York City-issued parking permits that expired at the end of December, you can start using it again. The New York City Department of Transportation has reversed its previous decision in light of the Omicron wave and reinstated the permits' validity through Saturday, April 30. Also, if you got a ticket this month while using the expired permit, you can appeal it before the New York City Parking Violations Bureau. However, as before, no new permits are being issued.

Getting Help When You Need It

I hope you find these updates helpful. It's important that you have the latest information as you go about your jobs and your lives. And if you need other things to help you do your job better, please let your manager know. For example, I know that many of you want to know where you can eat safely; [here is a list](#) covering most of our sites. I also know that our ED colleagues and those in the COVID-19 units are sometimes too busy to go out and get a meal, so we're trying to get food delivered directly to them when we can.

And know, too, that if the pandemic is taking a toll on your emotions, you are not alone. Our [well-being resources](#) can help. They include self-care, spiritual care, and behavioral health care. I hope you'll make use of them whenever you need to.

Thank you again for everything you are doing. With all of your help, we are making progress, even if it is not always obvious. You are meeting the challenge, and I couldn't be more proud of every one of you.