




## Office of the Chancellor

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DATE: April 18, 2022

TO: NMSU system students, faculty, and staff

FROM: Chancellor Dan Arvizu 

SUBJECT: Weekly testing ends May 5 for all; student vaccine requirement starts July 1

Today, I am announcing some important changes to our policy on COVID-19 vaccination for students and testing for those with approved vaccine exemptions:

- As of July 1, 2022, students enrolled in classes who will be on campus for any reason must be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Incoming new and/or transfer students must upload their COVID-19 vaccination records or an approved exemption by August 1, 2022.
- Students who do not submit their COVID-19 vaccination records or receive an exemption will be subject to disenrollment.
- NMSU will discontinue its weekly testing requirement after May 5 for those who are opting not to take the booster or have an approved exemption for the primary vaccine series.

As you know, the New Mexico State University system implemented a requirement at the beginning of this year that all faculty and staff become vaccinated against COVID-19 or obtain an approved exemption, and that all students who are present on campus must either become vaccinated or submit weekly COVID-19 test results.

Our community fought the battle against COVID-19. More than 91% students and 99% faculty and staff are already vaccinated. These numbers have allowed us to fulfill the NMSU mission during difficult times. Now, after consulting with the New Mexico Department of Health, guidance from the CDC, peers at other universities, and experts within the NMSU community, we are making some changes to our policies to align with current practices and recommendations.

Monitoring and enforcing compliance with requirements of testing for students and those with exemptions has been an important but extremely time-consuming process for many of our administrators and their staff. It's also unclear how much longer PCR testing will be available at no cost, as federal funding to support this testing may soon run out. **As a result, NMSU will discontinue its testing requirement after May 5.**

We encourage continued testing as an effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by allowing you to make timely decisions about quarantine and isolation; however, this will no longer be mandatory for anyone, including for employees who are vaccinated but have not yet received a booster. At this time, home tests are available for pickup at Aggie Health and Wellness Center, and Curative is still offering testing weekdays in the Pan Am parking lot.

Page 2

April 18, 2022

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Another change for faculty and staff is discontinuation of recording boosters. We highly encourage boosters for all, but we define fully vaccinated in the same way as the CDC: [two weeks after receiving all recommended doses in the primary series of their COVID-19 vaccination](#). Boosters add to vaccine efficacy, and a second booster dose has been authorized for those who are 50 and older or who are immunocompromised. You can register for a second booster shot at [nmvaccine.org](http://nmvaccine.org).

**Vaccination for students who will be on campus for any reason is required beginning July 1, 2022.** We know that vaccination is one of our most effective tools for preventing serious illness and hospitalization due to COVID-19 infection, and in the absence of mandatory surveillance testing, this expanded vaccine requirement will help reduce the risk to our students, faculty and staff and help keep our students and our community as safe and healthy as possible.

All current students in the NMSU system who attend classes or activities in person are required to complete their primary vaccine series – meaning two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine – and upload their vaccination records by July 1, unless they request and are approved for an exemption or extension of that date. In order to meet this deadline, students must have their first dose of Moderna by June 3 or their first dose of Pfizer by June 10.

All new and transfer students in the NMSU system who attend classes or activities in person are required to complete their primary vaccine series and upload their vaccination records by Aug. 1, unless they request and are approved for an exemption or extension of that date. In order to meet this deadline, students must have their first dose of Moderna by July 4 or their first dose of Pfizer by July 11.

Students who do not submit their vaccination records or receive an exemption in time will be subject to disenrollment. Aggie Health and Wellness Center is a fast and convenient provider of the Pfizer vaccine in Las Cruces. To schedule a vaccine appointment, visit [vaccinenm.org](http://vaccinenm.org) and select Aggie Health and Wellness Center as your location. For questions, call the AHCW pharmacy at 575-646-8302 and speak with a pharmacist.

We are rolling out a new, simpler platform for uploading both vaccine records and exemption requests in the coming weeks, and will provide detailed information about how to access that system soon. Student vaccine exemption requests will be submitted through this system when it is operational. If you plan to submit an exemption request, please watch for more information about how to do so. For now, students may continue to submit their vaccination records to either [VaxTrax.nmsu.edu](http://VaxTrax.nmsu.edu) or [Crimson Connection](#). If you have already uploaded your vaccination proof or exemption documentation, no action is needed. Those records will carry over to the new system.

We recognize that this represents a significant change from our previous policy for students. An online town hall session is planned at 3 p.m. Tuesday, April 19, to provide more information about this change and how it will affect students enrolled in summer and fall 2022 courses. I encourage students and their families to tune in on [Zoom](#) and to [submit questions](#) in advance. You can always submit your questions about NMSU's COVID-19 response to [covid19@nmsu.edu](mailto:covid19@nmsu.edu).