

COVID-19 Vaccine:

An Open Letter to Our California University Communities

To: Our students, faculty colleagues, and all others who help make our universities some of the greatest purveyors of knowledge in the world.

Who We Are

We are deans, directors and chairs at schools and programs of public health in public and private California universities. We are trained scholars and scientists from a variety of health-related disciplines. We share a mission of improving public health. Some of us are physicians.

As members of the California university community, we urge you to take an authorized COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to you.

Why You Should Get the Vaccine

- Over 3.4 million COVID-19 cases have been diagnosed in California, over 27 million across the United States. Over 44,000 people in California have died during the pandemic. Safe and effective vaccines are the best and only way to fully defeat the virus and end the pandemic.
- The COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have been proven safe and highly effective. By combining widespread vaccination with effective implementation of public health measures, testing and treatment, we can return our communities to normal life as quickly as possible.
- The more people get vaccinated, the greater the “herd immunity” that will keep the virus from spreading. Research tells us, and Dr. Fauci reminds us, that to achieve herd immunity a large majority of the population must be vaccinated.
- We recognize that many students may feel they are young and healthy and not likely to get a serious case of COVID-19. This may be true for many. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that over 22% of recorded cases have been in the 18-29 year old group, the highest percentage of any age group. And young adults are likely to pass the virus on to others – friends, parents, grandparents – due to ongoing social interactions and congregate living situations. These friends and relatives might get much more serious, even fatal cases.

Vaccine Safety Information

- The reviews that a vaccination must undergo – even for emergency use – are extremely rigorous. There are multiple reviews by government agencies, including the FDA and the CDC, and by independent panels of medical researchers and scientists.
- Although this is the first time this type of vaccine has been approved for emergency use authorization, the science behind this type of vaccine goes back 30 years.
- We understand that some are concerned about both the short-term and long-term effects of vaccinations. But clinical trials for vaccines produced by pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna and authorized by the FDA reveal that the likelihood of severe side effects is extremely rare. To make certain this remains the case, data will continue to be collected for two years after a vaccine is first administered. It should also be noted that you cannot contract COVID-19 from getting the vaccination.

Follow the Research and the Science

- Rather than science and evidence, the case against vaccines is based on fear and misinformation. Over the years, there have been multiple peer-reviewed studies of vaccines. Some have focused on specific vaccines for specific diseases; others have reviewed the safety and effectiveness of vaccines as a whole. These studies have been produced by many of the nation's most respected schools of public health, medical schools, research institutions, and foundations.

The evidence from these studies leads to the same conclusions: authorized vaccines are safe and effective. For the great majority of the population, the benefits, --including life-saving benefits-- of getting vaccinated clearly outweigh any potential risks of not doing so.

Please join us by doing your part; for yourself, your family, your fellow students, and our entire community:

Get vaccinated

Statement Signatories

1. Bernadette Boden-Albala, Director and Dean, School of Population Health, UC Irvine
2. Bethany Rainisch, Associate Professor, CSU Northridge
3. Cheryl Anderson, Dean, UC San Diego School of Public Health
4. Christina Holub, Interim Program Director, Assistant Professor, CSU San Marcos
5. Daramola Cabral, Professor of Public Health and Population Health Sciences, CSU Monterey Bay
6. Deirdra Wilson, Assistant Professor and Chair of the Dual Degree Program, Touro University
7. Eyal Oren, Interim Director, School of Public Health, San Diego State University
8. Farrell Webb, Dean, College of Health and Human Development, CSU, Northridge
9. Gayle Cummings, Assistant Dean & Program Director, Public Health Program, Touro University
10. Hala Madanat, Director, School of Public Health at San Diego State University
11. Heather Diaz, Professor, Graduate Program Coordinator, Sacramento State University
12. Helen Hopp Marshak, Dean, School of Public Health, Loma Linda University
13. Holly Nevarez, Chair, Department of Public Health, CSU, Chico
14. Howard Hu, M.D., Chair, Department of Preventive Medicine, Keck School of Medicine of USC
15. Irene Yen, Professor of Public Health, School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts, UC Merced
16. Jay Orr, Dean, School of Community & Global Health, Claremont Graduate University
17. Jason Smith, Chair, Department of Health Sciences, CSU East Bay
18. Jesus Ramirez-Valles, Director, Health Equity Institute (HEI), SF State University
19. Joshua Yang, Professor, Coordinator, MPH Program, CSU, Fullerton
20. Kaitlin Bahr, Associate Professor, Dept of Health Sciences, CSU Northridge
21. Kamiar Alaei, Department Chair, Health Science, CSU Long Beach
22. Kara Zagrafos, Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, CSU Fresno
23. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, Vice Dean for Population Health & Health Equity, UCSF School of Medicine
24. Lal Mian, Interim Department Chair, Health Science and Human Ecology, CSUSB
25. Lilia Espinoza, Associate Professor, Coordinator, Undergraduate Program in Public Health, CSU, Fullerton
26. Lisa Goldman Rosas, Research Director, Program on Prevention Outcomes and Practices, Stanford University
27. Megan O'Banion, Associate Dean, School of Nursing & Health Professions, University of San Francisco
28. Melanie Sabado-Liwag, Assistant Professor, MPH Program Coordinator, CSU, Los Angeles
29. Michael Lu, Dean, School of Public Health, UC, Berkeley
30. Michael Mink, Department Chair, Department of Public Health, College of Health & Human Services, Sacramento State University

31. Michael Cousineau, Clinical Professor, Department of Preventive Medicine and Family Medicine, University of Southern California
32. Michele Wood, Chair, Department of Public Health, CSU, Fullerton
33. Monica Jazzabi, MD, Director, Student Health Center, CSU, Los Angeles
34. Nancy Burke, Professor of Public Health, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, UC Merced
35. Nicole Henley, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Science and Human Ecology, Cal State San Bernardino
36. Oladele "Dele" Ogunseitan, professor of Environmental Health, Science, and Policy, UC Irvine
37. Pamela Krochalk, Health Science Program Chair, CSU Dominguez Hills
38. Richard Watanabe, Associate Dean for Health and Population Science Programs, Keck School of Medicine, USC
39. Ron Brookmeyer, Dean, Fielding School of Public Health, UCLA
40. Salvador Esparza, Chair, Department of Health Sciences, CSU Northridge
41. Susan Perez, Associate Professor, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Sacramento State University
42. Sonsoles De Lacalle, Chair, Department of Health Science, CSU, Channel Islands
43. Walter Zelman, Chair and Professor, Department of Public Health, CSU, LA
44. Yoshitaka Iwasaki, Professor and Chair, Department of Public Health and Recreation, College of Health and Human Sciences, San Jose State University