

September 2: Booster Vaccination; NM Vaccine Town Halls; and Updated Guidelines for Meetings, Events, Travel and Masking

Today's issue features updated information about booster vaccines, as well as details regarding the upcoming COVID-19 Vaccine Virtual Town Halls at Northwestern Medicine. It also includes updated guidelines for NM meetings, events, travel and indoor masking at NM facilities.

Please note: Starting with the September 9 issue, *COVID-19 Update* will be part of the newly redesigned *Physician Focus* newsletter. *Physician Focus* will be distributed via email every other Thursday to all physicians who serve on the medical staff of an NM hospital, as well as to all advance practice providers and others who currently receive *COVID-19 Update*. Going forward, *COVID-19 Update* will be distributed on an as-needed basis. All issues of the newsletter can be found on the [COVID-19 Update Archive page](#) on Physician Forum.

BOOSTER VACCINATION

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently reviewing results of clinical trials to determine the need for and timing of COVID-19 boosters. We anticipate additional information later this month. Once that guidance is received, members of the NM workforce who qualify will be encouraged to receive the booster shot wherever it is most convenient.

Please continue to watch the COVID-19 pages on [Physician Forum](#) and [NM Interactive](#) (login required) for additional information regarding booster vaccination.

VIRTUAL COVID-19 VACCINE TOWN HALL EVENTS

Live, virtual Town Hall events will be offered in the coming weeks to give physicians and employees an opportunity to receive answers to questions about COVID-19 vaccines. The Teams events will feature a multidisciplinary group of NM physicians.

Please submit questions here prior to the event. Questions also can be typed in the chat during the events. Note that attendees will not be able to unmute their devices to ask questions.

The dates and time of the Town Hall events will be announced soon. One session will be recorded and posted on NMI for those who are unable to attend. Registration will not be required, but attendees will need to be logged in to the NM network to access the events.

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS, EVENTS, TRAVEL AND MASKING

In-person meeting limitations

Internal meetings are now limited to small groups, and will require that all participants remain masked and are able to maintain 6 feet of physical distance. Food is not permitted. This applies to both clinical as well as administrative buildings. Meetings can be held outside, and masking/group size should follow public health guidelines.

Events and classes should be virtual or postponed

Fundraising events must be virtual or postponed, and community classes should be virtual. If a class requires in-person facilitation, an exception must be requested.

For more details, including how to request exceptions, visit [Guidelines for Meetings, Classes and Events](#) in the COVID-19 section on Physician Forum and [NMI](#) (login required).

NM-sponsored travel postponed

International and domestic business travel is postponed through at least September 30. Please do not submit new applications for travel during this time period. Click [here](#) for an FAQ with additional details, including what to do if you have already paid for travel during this time.

These travel guidelines are effective immediately and will be re-evaluated in mid-September for activities in October and beyond. Continue to check the COVID-19 pages on [Physician Forum](#) and [NMI](#) (login required) for the most up-to-date information.

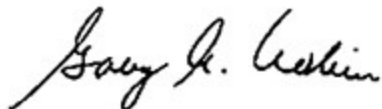
Masks required for all indoor NM locations

In response to the spread of the delta variant and based on the State of Illinois indoor mask mandate, masks are required indoors in all NM locations regardless of vaccination status. This includes conference rooms and in-person meetings.

In settings that are not open to the public, masks can be removed when employees remain in one location and maintain at least 6 feet from all other individuals. For example, if an employee is sitting in a cubicle 6 feet away from another employee, they may remove their mask. They should put their mask on when moving into common areas, such as break rooms and bathrooms.

For the latest information about workforce vaccination and updated guidelines, please continue to visit the COVID-19 pages on [Physician Forum](#) and [NMI](#) (login required).

The Chicago metropolitan area continues to have high rates of community transmission of COVID-19 and increasing hospitalizations. The majority of those hospitalized are unvaccinated. Now that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is approved by the Food and Drug Administration, please encourage those who have been vaccine-hesitant to get vaccinated.



Gary A. Noskin, MD
Senior Vice President, Quality
Northwestern Memorial HealthCare
Chief Medical Officer
Northwestern Memorial Hospital

