UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

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Flu Clinic Q&A

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Beginning Nov. 1, 2020, the UC Office of the President is making influenza vaccinations mandatory for all faculty, staff and students who will be working, living or learning on a UC campus anytime during the 2020-21 flu season.

As a service to those at UC Santa Barbara, the University is holding a flu vaccination clinic at which any faculty or staff member or student can receive a flu shot at no charge to them.

Questions can be directed via email to FluVaccination2020@sa.ucsb.edu.

The Current sat down with Dr. Vejas Skripkus, executive director of Student Health and campus physician, to talk about why the flu vaccination is particularly important this season and how the flu clinic benefits faculty, staff and students.

TC: Why is a flu shot of such importance this year that the UC Office of the President would require every UC faculty and staff member and student to receive one?

VS: With the onset of flu season, we are bound to get peaks of COVID-19 and flu at the same time, and even if the flu season is mild this year, the convergence of the two viruses could quickly overwhelm our hospital systems. With a safe and effective flu vaccine we can decrease the risk of filling our local hospital ICUs with influenza patients, which means more resources remain available for those with COVID-19 and

other critical health issues.

As we all know, the flu can strike anyone, and even young, healthy individuals can be out of commission for two weeks or more due to fever and fatigue. And because people of all ages can die from influenza, it's critically important that we protect as much as possible the more vulnerable among us — our children, our parents and our grandparents.

TC: What are the clinic dates, and who is eligible to receive a vaccination?

VS: The clinic is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sep. 30, through Friday, Oct. 2; and Monday, Oct. 5 through Wednesday, Oct. 7. It is being held in the area outside the Recreation Center (no one may enter any buildings) and free parking is available in Lot 16.

Vaccinations are limited to UC Santa Barbara faculty, staff and students.

TC: What about the cost?

VS: There is no out-of-pocket cost to anyone who receives a vaccination. Health insurance providers are billed automatically and any expense not covered by providers is paid by the University.

TC: Who is administering the vaccinations, and are appointments necessary?

VS: The University is partnering with LabCorp, Inc. Appointments are required and can be made by logging onto LabCorp's registration page. Faculty and staff members need to provide their UC Santa Barbara employee identification number, which they can find on UCPath, and students need to provide their Perm number. They can then choose a date and time to receive their vaccination. Those who don't have internet access can call (844) 251-6524 to register and make an appointment. Information is available in both English and Spanish.

TC: Is there anyone for whom the vaccine administered at the clinic is not appropriate?

VS: People over 65 should receive the high-dose flu vaccine, which aren't available at the clinic. Those individuals have to go to their healthcare providers for this vaccine. Also, egg-free vaccines aren't available at the clinic and we encourage staff

and faculty members to get those from their healthcare providers. Students can receive the egg-free vaccine at the Student Health Center after Oct. 8, 2020.

TC: What should people bring with them to their appointments?

VS: People coming to the clinic are asked to provide one form of personal identification and their insurance card. They also should remember to wear their face coverings, which are required at all times while on campus, and they should adhere to physical distancing protocols.

In addition, everyone who comes to the clinic receives a COVID-19 symptom screening and their temperature is taken.

TC: Can people request a medical exemption or accommodation?

VS: Yes. Staff and faculty members seeking a medical exemption or other accommodation should log onto the Human Resources ServiceNow and request a Medical Exemption/Accommodation Request form. Students seeking a medical exemption or accommodation, as provided in the UC Immunization Exemption Policy , should submit their request using the UCSB Student Health Gateway patient portal.

TC: How do faculty and staff members who receive their flu vaccinations somewhere other than the on-campus clinic indicate they are in compliance with the mandate?

VS: They are asked to log into the Point N Click electronic health record portal using their UCSBnetID and indicate that the vaccination was received.

TC: Where can people who have additional questions about the flu clinic or the vaccination mandate get information? They can email FluVaccination2020@sa.ucsb.edu. In addition, UC Office of the President has developed a set of FAQ's that provides answers to general questions.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society.

All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.