UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

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Flu Vaccination Q&A

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 held a flu vaccination clinic from Sep. 30 – Oct. 7.

Questions about the mandate 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 mandate and why a flu shot is particularly important this season.

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: 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.