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Boosting the Community

In an effort to prevent further spread of COVID-19 in Isla Vista and the broader Goleta and Santa Barbara communities, UC Santa Barbara is partnering with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department to hold a booster vaccination clinic on multiple days in January.

The clinic began Jan. 11 with a full slate of appointments and served walk-ins through the afternoon, staffed by Santa Barbara County as well as volunteers from UC Santa Barbara. The first day saw many Isla Vista residents, including Santa Barbara City College students, taking advantage of the clinic, as well as UCSB students and others.

The operation will continue Jan. 18, 21, 25, and 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at UC Santa Barbara's Embarcadero Hall in Isla Vista. Appointments are available through the MyTurn system; boosters also will be offered, as available, on days that book out.

The CDC now defines "fully vaccinated" as a person who has received a booster vaccination for COVID-19. The agency recommends a booster beginning five months after completing the original vaccination series of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or the Moderna vaccine, and two months after the J&J/Janssen vaccine.

With the region currently experiencing record numbers of daily COVID cases amidst the surge credited to Omicron, boosters are a critical tool in helping to stem infections, according to Vejas Skripkus, M.D., executive director of Student Health

and campus physician at UCSB.

“There is strong evidence that infection leading to asymptomatic, mild, or moderate illness can occur from the Omicron variant in persons who have previously received two doses of the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) or the single-dose J&J/Janssen vaccine,” Skripkus said. “There is also a significant risk for reinfection by the Omicron variant for those previously infected with other variants of the virus who are not vaccinated.

“Fortunately,” Skripkus added, “recent studies demonstrate that a third ‘booster’ vaccination with either the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA vaccine can provide very high levels of protective antibodies against the Omicron variant. Thus, the single most effective strategy at this time for mitigating transmission is widespread booster vaccination. We are pleased to partner with Santa Barbara County Public Health to offer boosters not only to our students, but to residents of Isla Vista and surrounding communities.”

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.