

# 8AM Covid-19 Response Call

November 1, 2021



# Agenda

- Covid-19 update – Led by Ian A. Waitz, with the Covid-19 Testing Team, Emergency Management, and Medical
  - Latest trends on campus
  - Recent federal policies
  - Status of campus policies (indoor masking, student travel)
  - Boosters and child vaccines
  - Approach for Thanksgiving holiday
- Thoughts on the rest of the semester – Led by Ian A. Waitz
- AOB – All

# Dashboard update and themes from cases

## **So far, so good...**

- Overall case counts remain modest (~0.05% positive rate)
- Positives remain related to off-campus social interactions with food and drink, social interactions without masking, household contact of positive cases, exposures to non-MIT positive cases off campus.
- So far, no clusters identified in the MIT community.

## **Thanks to everyone for remaining vigilant.**

- Please continue to follow masking and tap-in requirements, and be courteous to others if they remind you to do the same.

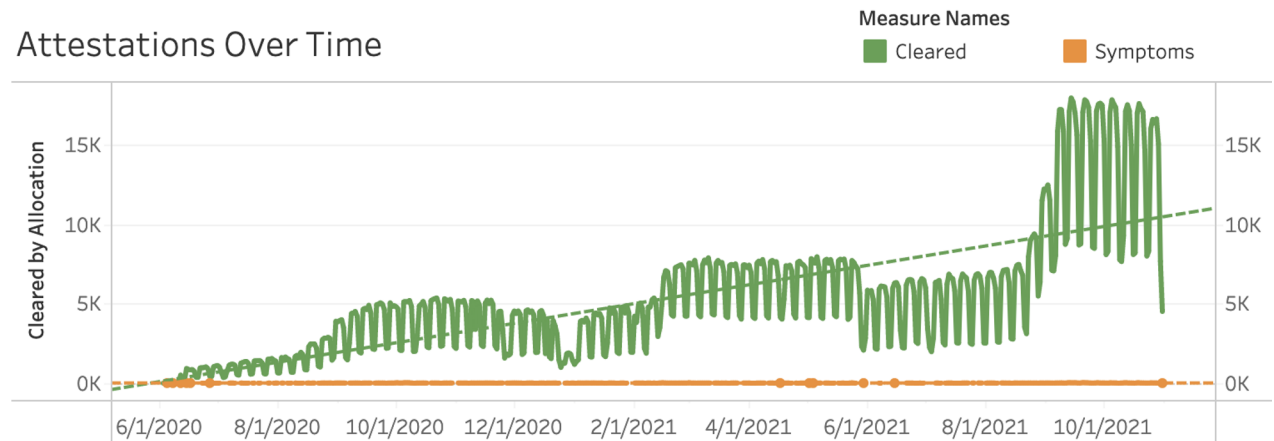
# Testing continues to go well

**34K tests/week @ <24 hour average turn-around time, ~18K people on campus on a typical day**

Covid tools and support are working well:

- Covid Pass
- Campus Access protocols
- Contact Tracing
  - Tim Tickets \*
  - Mobile ID
  - Classroom support

\*nearly 1800 events used the tool to date





# Recent federal policies

- As a federal contractor, MIT is subject to a new requirement that its employees be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 by December 8.
  - MIT can no longer offer an exemption from vaccination for employees who work remotely, unless they work entirely outside of the US.
  - Staff, faculty, and postdocs in the US with a remote exemption must be fully vaccinated, or receive a medical or religious exemption, by December 8.
  - Staff, faculty, postdocs, and other Covid Pass users who have received a religious exemption must complete **a new exemption request form** to provide additional information consistent with the new requirements.
  - Because many of our students work on federally funded projects (including UROPs and research assistants), and in order to maintain a consistent approach for all community members who regularly access campus, **we are modifying the religious exemption process for students as well.**

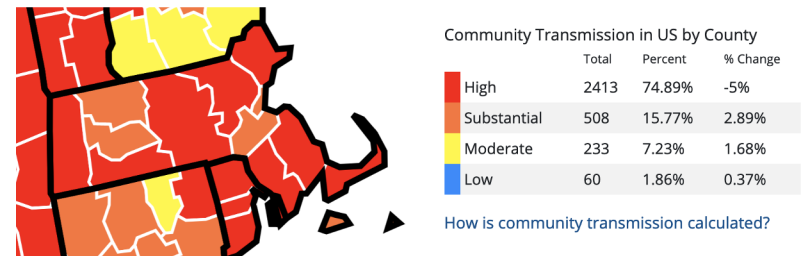
# Status of campus policies

## Indoor masking (and why we are still masking)

- It is working.
- We are subject to Middlesex county and federal policies.
  - New federal policies require two weeks at *low* or *moderate* level before removing masks indoors (all of MA is currently at *substantial* or *high* risk).
- We are yet through the holiday/travel season.

## Testing 2x/week for students, 1x/week for staff

- It's working.
- Self-observed testing is easy and efficient.



<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

# Status of campus policies

## Student travel policies

- On October 25, 2021 President Biden issued a [Proclamation](#), effective November 8, 2021, removing most travel restrictions on entry to the U.S. by nonimmigrant air travelers.
  - New requirement is that *all air travelers* to the U.S., *from all regions of the world*, show proof of COVID vaccination and negative COVID test results before being able to board a flight to the U.S.
  - Beginning sometime in November (date to be determined soon), fully vaccinated travelers from Canada and Mexico will be allowed to enter the U.S. via land border and ferry crossings.
  - Until an official effective date is announced, [restrictions on land border entry to the U.S. from Canada and Mexico](#) remain in place.

# Status of campus policies

## MIT student travel policy update (11/1/21)

- Undergraduate and graduate student travel to CDC Level 3 countries allowed with no waiver or exception required.
- A high-risk waiver is still required for student travel to countries rated [CDC Level 4](#) and/or [DOS Travel Advisory Levels 3 & 4](#).
- Students, including those with approved religious or medical exemptions from vaccination, may travel to CDC Level 3 countries with no waiver or exception and are urged to:
  - Carefully understand all applicable travel restrictions (airline rules, country-specific entry requirements, etc.); and
  - Make an appointment with the MIT Medical travel health clinic as part of their travel planning.



# Booster shots & vaccine for children

- COVID-19 vaccines (initial doses and boosters) and preventive measures for COVID-19 are important, especially if you are older or have multiple or severe health conditions.
  - **Higher ed workers *are eligible* for boosters**
- FDA has approved the use of the vaccine for children 5-11; CDC is expected to approve as early as tomorrow.

# Thanksgiving holiday plans

- As staff, students, faculty, and others return to campus from the Thanksgiving weekend, **we anticipate higher testing volumes which may lead to longer times to receive test results.**
- As we did in September, we **encourage employees to test on Wednesday, and where feasible, for managers to allow employees to work remotely on Monday and Tuesday following Thanksgiving to support load balancing (since students are required to test on Monday or Tuesday).**
  - We recognize, of course, that remote work is not possible for all employees and types of work, and schedule changes must be approved by managers and supervisors.

# Thoughts on the rest of the semester

- We are watching conditions carefully
- There are three (unsurprising) scenarios:
  - **things get worse** (winter wave): Keep our current policies.
  - **things stay the same**: Keep our current policies.
  - **things get better**: We start to relax our current policies.

But given where we stand, *it is likely our policies will be in place for most of the rest of the semester*, especially with the new federal policies requiring 2 weeks at low or moderate risk before changing the masking rules.

**We know it is a  
burden to keep up  
the fight...**

**Thanks to our  
amazing community  
for remaining  
vigilant...**

**... And for keeping  
everyone's spirits up.**





**Q&A**