

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Transition to Phase 4 Campus Operations Effective July 5

June 25, 2021

To the UT Southwestern community:

Since transitioning to Phase 3 operations on May 1, we have continued to monitor COVID-19 conditions closely, and I am pleased to report that the metrics have remained “green” or consistently favorable during this period. The daily hospital census of COVID-19 patients remains low, there have not been any known on-campus transmissions amongst employees or by patients to employees in several months, and our [forecasting model](#) continues to be encouraging.

Based on these continued trends and metrics, as well as the high rate of vaccination among our campus community and the recommendation of our Emergency Operations Committee/Return to Operations Committee (E/ROC) colleagues, **effective July 5** we will transition campus operations to Phase 4, allowing for a **return to normal operations in all nonclinical areas and some modification of practices in our clinical facilities.**

Nonclinical environments

Masks and physical distancing are no longer required in any nonclinical facilities, including educational spaces. However, we strongly encourage anyone who has not been vaccinated to continue to wear a mask to protect yourself and those around you. For those who have not yet done so, please [sign up](#) (VPN required) to receive the vaccine. Individuals who are fully vaccinated may certainly still wear a mask at their discretion, but we support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines advising those who are fully vaccinated that they may safely forgo wearing masks except in select settings.

There will no longer be any limits on the size of group gatherings within nonclinical facilities, including all meeting spaces, common areas, lobbies, food courts, and academic settings. Additional entrances will be opened for employees.

Clinical facilities

Masks will continue to be required in all clinical settings for all faculty, staff, learners, visitors, and patients.

However, screeners will no longer be stationed at employee badge-access entrances to clinical facilities. Signs at entrances will remind employees entering our facilities that by doing so, they are attesting to the assurance that they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms and that they have self-screened prior to coming to campus. As previously communicated by Health System leadership, the use of eye protection

during routine patient interactions is no longer mandatory, except as required under standard Health System policies.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank the members of the E/ROC who played a vital role in guiding and operationalizing our decisions related to campus operations and safety since the onset of the pandemic. We owe a special debt of gratitude to this group for their service, especially its leaders **Dr. William Daniel**, Vice President and Chief Quality Officer, and **Dr. Bruce Brown**, Associate Vice President for Safety and Business Continuity. Given our transition to Phase 4 and current conditions, I have decided to sunset the E/ROC at this time. However, as I have emphasized in the past, our top priority has been, and will continue to be, the safety of our campus community. If COVID-19 conditions change, we will adjust campus operations accordingly, including reinstatement of the E/ROC as needed.

A detailed FAQ regarding Phase 4 is posted on our [COVID-19 webpage](#), which I encourage you to review. I also welcome you to send any questions to covid-19questions@utsouthwestern.edu, which I look forward to answering during my next monthly Campus Briefing on June 30.

Moving to Phase 4 is an achievement we should all be proud of and one that would not have been possible without your continued vigilance and support. Thanks for all you do to keep the UT Southwestern campus safe while still ensuring we advance our institutional mission to promote health and a healthy society.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.
President, UT Southwestern Medical Center