

Update on COVID-19 Recommendations from the PLATO COVID-19 Advisory Workgroup

As we know, **COVID-19 cases have continued to rise in the Midwest**. We continue to see both the Delta and Omicron variants across the country. The vaccines and the first booster are keeping hospitalization rates and death rates lower in comparison to the case rates. Our hospitals are full, but the current crisis is most related to staffing. The healthcare system has been pushed to its limit by this pandemic.

Recommendations:

- 1) As previously stated in all the Workgroup recommendations, we must first abide by all guidance provided by **Dane County**. Then we need to follow all requirements of the **hosting sites**.
- 2) Wear a mask, **preferably use a KN-95 or a N-95**. They are available and provide the best protection for us when dealing with a highly transmissible Omicron variant.
- 3) The latest news is saying that there will be an Omicron booster available, maybe as soon as March. **If it becomes available to you, take it**. A specific Omicron booster will provide an individual with the highest level of protection.
- 4) When meeting with others, always wear a mask, except when eating or drinking. So, if you are meeting in person and not eating or drinking, **wear a mask the entire time**.
- 5) **The Omicron variant is highly transmissible**. The rate of transmission is much greater than any of the previous variants. With that in mind, **social distance at least six feet** when you are in closed spaces. This will provide a high level of protection.
- 6) COVID-19 home tests are available through many different retailers and **every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free at-home tests** through www.covidtests.gov for the time being. Take advantage of this testing mechanism.

Be well and stay safe,

Meg Taylor, Chair

PLATO COVID-19 Advisory Workgroup