

## **MAHEC Guidelines for Re-Opening**

These practices apply to all departments at MAHEC and are based on CDC and OSHA guidelines and the State of NC Public Health Recommendations. These protocols are effective on May 26, 2021, and are subject to change based on community transmission levels of COVID-19.

### **Definitions**

- **Fully Vaccinated** refers to a person who is:
  - More than 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna), OR
  - More than 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson)
- **Unvaccinated** refers to a person who does not fit the definition of “fully vaccinated,” including people whose vaccination status is unknown.

### **Screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19**

COVID-19 testing is recommended for any individual experiencing symptoms, regardless of vaccination status.

- **Employees will complete the daily symptom screenings.**
  - Employees will not report to work with symptoms of COVID-19 or after exposure to an infected person without employee health clearance, regardless of vaccination status
  - COVID-19 testing is recommended for all employees experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of vaccination status
- **Patients will be screened per current protocol.**
  - Symptomatic visitors will be seen in the ACC or offered a telehealth appointment, regardless of vaccination status

### **Vaccines**

MAHEC recommends all employees get the COVID-19 vaccine; however, it is not mandated at this time. Please submit proof of vaccine to employee health at [employeehealth@mahec.net](mailto:employeehealth@mahec.net).

### **Facemasks**

Although mask-wearing for fully vaccinated people is not mandated in certain situations, it is not required. Fully vaccinated people may choose to continue wearing masks in these situations.

- **Clinical Areas**
  - All clinical employees and students are required to wear a Kn95 (or n95 as appropriate) while in patient care and clinical areas, regardless of vaccination status
  - All patients & visitors are required to wear a facemask that covers their nose and mouth
- **Indoor Non-Clinical Areas (UNC Health Sciences Building & Education Building)**
  - **Common Areas:**
    - Fully vaccinated employees and students may choose to remove their masks in common areas, such as hallways and bathrooms.
    - Unvaccinated employees must wear their facemasks in common areas.
  - **Alone in private offices:** All employees may remove their masks while working alone in their private offices

- **Sharing Private Office Spaces:**
  - MAHEC recommends that employees who share an office space receive the COVID-19 vaccine
  - Employees who share an office space may remove their masks if all parties are fully vaccinated and not experiencing symptoms.
- **Group meetings in Private Offices:**
  - If all participants are fully vaccinated, then they may choose to remove their masks
  - If unvaccinated participants are present, then all participants should wear a mask
- **Groups meetings in Conference and Meeting rooms:**
  - Participants may remove their masks if all parties in attendance are fully vaccinated
    - Unmasked employees in attendance will attest to being fully vaccinated
    - The attestation form is attached to this document and found on the COVID-19 intranet page under “employee resources.”
  - If unvaccinated participants are present, then all participants should wear a mask
  - Virtual meeting options are available in all meeting rooms. Participants may choose to attend remotely.
- **Outside**
  - Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to wear a mask or practice physical distancing
  - Unvaccinated employees that are not physically distanced should wear a mask

### **Eye Protection in clinical areas**

- Eye protection is required for direct patient care encounters. Employees may remove their eye protection after leaving the direct patient care space.
- The recommendation for use of universal eye protection will change when Buncombe County moves to minimum community transmission. Employees will be updated at that time.

*\*This recommendation is based on CDC Guidelines for Healthcare Personnel: “HCP working in facilities located in areas with moderate to substantial community transmission are more likely to encounter asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection. If SARS-CoV02 is not suspected in a patient presenting for care....eye protection should be worn during patient care encounters to ensure the eyes are also protected.” The CDC Guidelines for Healthcare Providers in response to COVID-19 Vaccine state that the “recommendation for use of PPE by healthcare providers remains unchanged,” regardless of vaccination status.*

### **Physical Distancing**

The safest approach is for everyone to practice physical distancing as much as possible.

- **Room Occupancy**
  - MAHEC will continue to follow OSHA’s maximum room occupancy guidelines. The occupancy numbers are posted outside of rooms.
  - **Clinical Areas:** A Maximum 3 people are allowed in an exam room at any time.

### **Patient Group Visits**

- Group visits may resume and must adhere to the maximum room occupancy.

Updated: May 24, 2021

- All participants must be screened for symptoms, wear a face mask, and maintain 6 feet of physical distance.

### **Students**

These recommendations apply to non-employed students. **A Maximum of 3 people are allowed in an exam room at any time.** This means that the student may not enter the room with their preceptor if the patient has a visitor.

- **Medical, Nurse Practitioner, and Pharmacy** students may continue on-campus experiences
- **Psychiatry and Dietary students** will continue using a hybrid model of remote and on-campus experiences
- **CMA/RN pipeline students:**
  - Will be assigned to a designated/assigned preceptor at all times. Or If the preceptor is out of office, the student will not report.
- **Individuals shadowing through the CHPE program** will remain off campus. They may utilize telehealth and remote experiences. On-campus educational classes and/or presentations may be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

### **Café Verbena**

- Will open on a limited basis in early June for dine-in and carry out.
- Unvaccinated individuals should maintain physical distancing guidelines during meals.
- Diners will wipe down tables with the dedicated wipes located in the Café prior to departure.
- Staff should adhere to the OSHA room occupancy signs posted.

### **Resources**

CDC. *Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendation for Healthcare Personnel during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic*. Retrieved on 5/20/21 from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

CDC. *Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People*. Retrieved on 5/20/21 from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

CDC. *Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendation in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html>

State of North Carolina. *Executive Order No. 215. Lifting COVID-19 Restrictions to Reflect New Public Health Recommendations*. Retrieved on 5/20/21 from [https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO215-Lifting-COVID-19-Restrictions\\_0.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO215-Lifting-COVID-19-Restrictions_0.pdf)

US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace*. Retrieved on 5/20/21 from <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>