

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Thank you notes, flowers and other symbols of gratitude have arrived in our Vaccination Centers as we have cared for over 5,000 patients seeking their first and second dose of the Moderna vaccine. Yesterday, an elderly gentleman began to cry tears of joy as he received his shot while another patient called me aside to say a special thank you for the University's role in helping to vaccinate our entire community.

We could not begin to open and operate these Vaccination Centers without the support and dedication of our students, faculty and staff. Your willingness to step up to help others is so very appreciated. We also experienced first-hand the amazing synergy that happens when members of an interprofessional One Health team are working together to care for others! Thank you again for the positivity and commitment to Operation Hope as you share your talents and time in our Centers. Fortunately, we continue to see a decline in positive COVID-19 cases. This week, there are no cases to report for our faculty and staff, and only three positive cases to report for our students, one from the Downers Grove Campus and two from the Glendale Campus. These latest numbers indicate a very promising trend that we have turned the corner on this public health crisis.

Our Downers Grove Vaccination Center will be open on Monday, March 22, 2021 to care for 140 patients. However, due to an unfortunate shortage of vaccine in DuPage County, it will be closed on Tuesday, March 23, 2021. We will embrace this as an opportunity to schedule volunteer training, and we invite those interested in serving as Scribes in the future to attend training in the Allscripts Software on Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> beginning at 9:00 A.M. and vaccination training that afternoon at 1:00 P.M. More details on how to register will be shared by your Deans and Department Managers on Monday afternoon; faculty, staff and students are eligible to register for these training sessions. For those of you scheduled to volunteer on Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, please note the Center will only be operating for the morning shift, which runs from 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 p.m. If the availability of the vaccine changes for the week of March 22-26, you will be notified. Please be assured that DuPage County has committed an adequate amount of vaccines for second doses already scheduled for April in our Downers Grove Vaccination Center.

Our Glendale Vaccination Center will be increasing our patient volume due to Maricopa County raising our vaccine allocation. We will begin partnering with our local manufacturing and retail establishments to start registering their employees for vaccinations, now that the county has expanded the eligibility requirements to include populations that work in these industries. Our volunteer shifts and daily operations will continue to be the same on the Glendale Campus.

### Special Congratulations

Please join me in congratulating the faculty, staff and students of the Chicago College of Optometry for the excellent news that their college is now fully accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education. This wonderful achievement reflects the hard work, dedication and leadership of the College. As our inaugural class prepares to graduate, we thank Dr. Melissa Suckow, Dean of the Chicago College of Optometry, for guiding this accreditation process over the past four years.

### Continued Progress in Diversity and Inclusion

- The College of Health Sciences, Physical Therapy Program is completing a week of celebrating diversity, which was organized by a series of student-hosted evening activities enjoyed by many students, faculty and staff. The very successful event included a Trivia Night on different cultures, the socioeconomic impact on health care disparities, mental and physical abilities, LGBTQ+ diversity, cultural diversity, and the practices of physical therapy around the world. The wonderfully high participation rate highlights the impact our Diversity and Inclusion Program is having on our students.
- Dr. Parres Wright, Professor, Chicago College of Optometry represented her college's Diversity and Inclusion Committee by attending a virtual conference on current practices in higher education and health professions education that focused on exploring implicit bias, recruitment practices and developing a framework for addressing disparities in health care delivery. The conference was presented by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

Tomorrow is the first official day of Spring often referred to as the March equinox. We have once again survived the long and often dark days of winter and are ready to enjoy more daylight hours and warming temperatures. It is this new light that ushers in more hope for the end of our pandemic and a brighter tomorrow.

Be well.

Dr. G.