



Dear Colleagues,

I hope that everyone had a wonderful and restful Thanksgiving holiday with friends and family. At my house, there is no pie left, but lots of other leftovers we are still working on.

Over the weekend, a lot of the news was about the new COVID-19 Omicron variant, and I wanted to get a message out to all of you about this topic. EPA values the health and wellbeing of every employee, and I will continue to stay in close communication with you about the agency's planning efforts.

At this time, it is too early to know whether and how this new variant will impact the progress toward recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic here in the United States or around the world. We committed to you in our Future of Work plans that we would follow the conditions on the ground. While we aren't making any changes to our plans today, we are monitoring this situation very closely. I want to assure you that we are closely following developments on this new variant and tracking any guidance coming from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Our public health officials [believe](#) that, while it will take a couple more weeks to have more definitive information on the transmissibility, severity, and other characteristics of the variant, the best protection against the Omicron variant is getting fully vaccinated—and getting a booster. President Biden and Dr. Fauci reiterated in remarks to the American public today that boosters for fully vaccinated individuals provide the strongest available protection from COVID-19.

All adults are eligible for a booster if they were vaccinated six months ago or more with Pfizer or Moderna, or two months ago or more with Johnson & Johnson. I encourage you to get your booster as soon as possible—I have an appointment to get mine this weekend. Employees will be granted paid administrative leave to obtain a booster, an [additional dose](#) for those are immunocompromised, or to accompany a family member who is receiving a vaccination. I also encourage all adults and children who are not yet fully vaccinated to get vaccinated as soon as they can. Getting everyone ages five years and older vaccinated protects families and communities.

As the President noted today, we are more prepared for the Omicron variant than all prior variants. EPA has achieved 95.3 percent compliance with President Biden's vaccination requirement and nearly 60 percent of Americans are fully vaccinated. Booster shots are authorized for all adults, vaccines are authorized for kids five and older, and FDA is reviewing additional anti-viral treatments for when people do get sick.

Thank you for all your hard work and for everything that you do to protect public health and the environment. As we have done for the past two years, we will get through this together.

Janet McCabe
Deputy Administrator