

AFGE Local 1263 Newsletter

(#26)

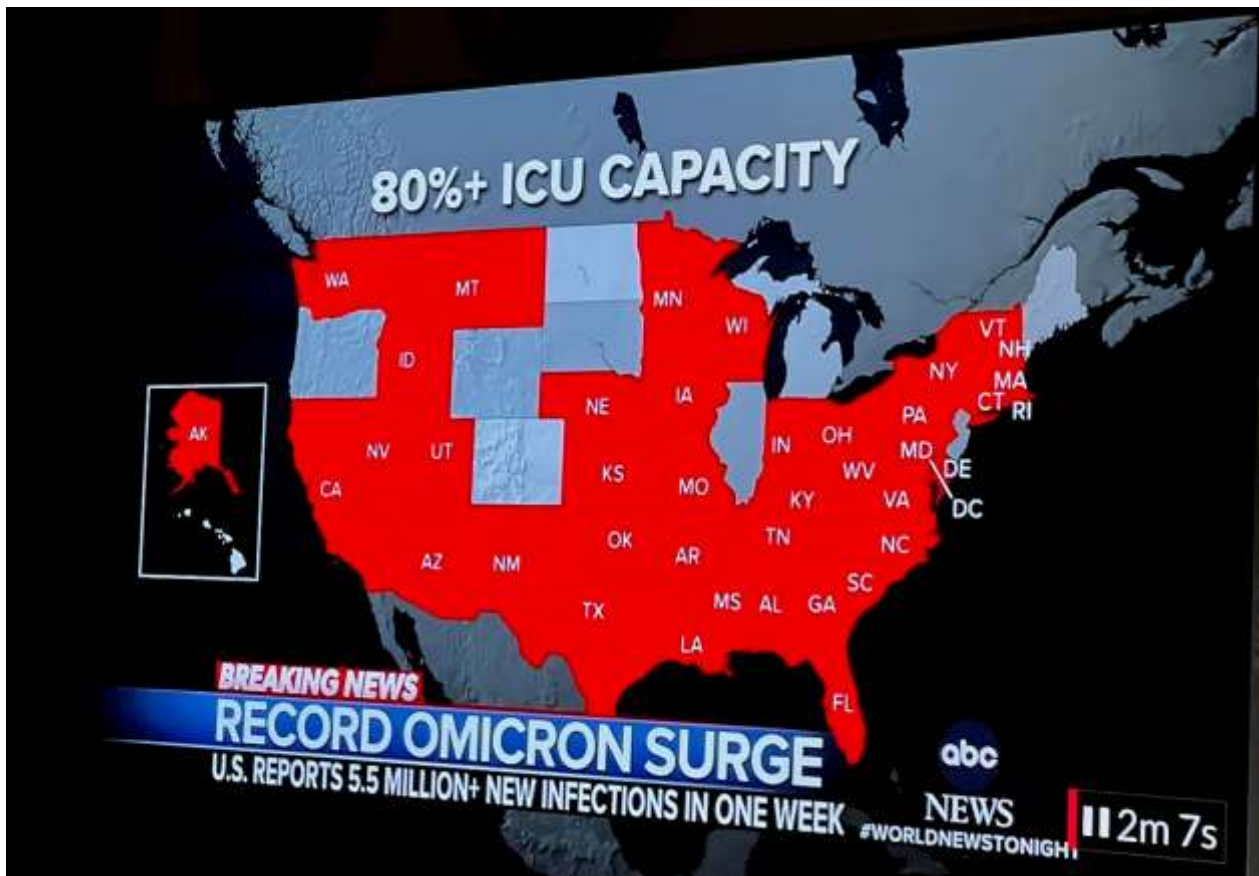
Saturday, 15 January 2022

The Omicron Edition (Part 1)

The Omicron variant rages across the country. Our DLIFLC students hail from all 50 states, and the majority of them returned to visit their families over the holidays -- some of them (undoubtedly) bringing their hometown version of the Omicron variant back with them to DLI.

And so, now we have reports of entire classes being told to "ROM" for 5 days, and MLIs who are being sent to ROM - as well as civilian personnel who have been working alongside them. It's a new ballgame.

From tonight's ABC News we can see the pandemic is expanding:

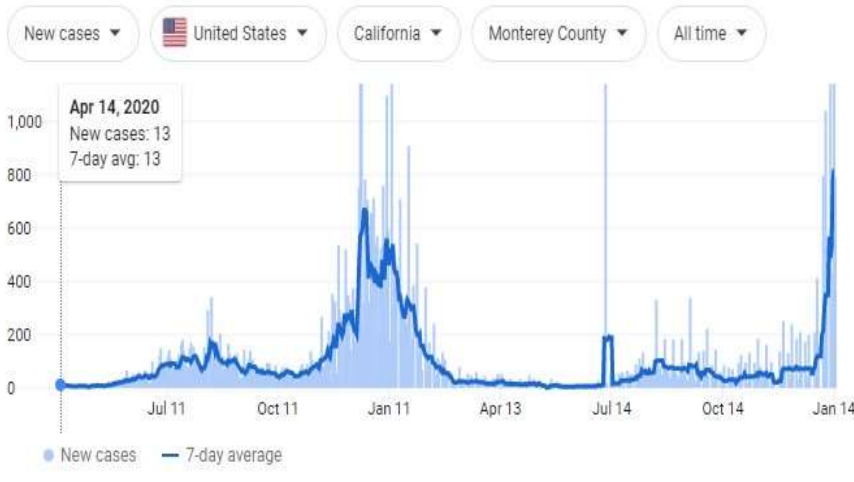


Monterey County showed 8191 COVID cases: January 1 to 14.

Statistics

✓ New cases and deaths

From [The New York Times](#) - Last updated: 1 day ago



Each day shows new cases reported since the previous day - [About this data](#)



COVID-19 vaccine

See updates and local info

Map of cases (last 14 days)

From [The New York Times](#) and others



[About this data](#)

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) now is recommending N-95 (or NK-95 masks) for adequate protection from the more-contagious Omicron variant. >>> [More on that, below.](#)

There are virtually no self-test kits available in the drug stores, and many of the COVID test sites have become overwhelmed with residents reporting for tests. >>> [More on that, also below.](#)

Many universities and colleges (as well as NPS) which were already on maximum Telework have now extended Telework for (at least) another two weeks (till at least the end of January). So, **why** has DLI been on "half-telework" since 5 January, and **why** are we now returning to full classroom teaching?

AFGE Local 1263's Demands to Bargain

Below is the text of the Demand to Bargain letter which the Union sent to the DLIFLC Administration, this week. We fully expected to negotiate – before the weekend -- but never got on DLI's calendar.

“On behalf of our Bargain-unit Employees at DLIFLC,

AFGE Local 1263 demands to fully bargain the use of Provisional Telework beginning 0745 on 18 January 2022 for the faculty and staff of DLIFLC to mitigate **the ever-increasing risk** of their contracting the Coronavirus **in the DLI-workplace**. The Union is available to Bargain today, as well as anytime over the long MLK weekend.

Bases for our Demand:

- 1.) While the average age of our students hovers right around twenty, the average age of **our staff/faculty is well-above 50, with an appreciable number of faculty members in their 60s and 70s**. Many of them have chronic medical conditions, which would place them at an elevated risk should they contract COVID – from a colleague or a student.
- 2.) The recent Commandant-mandated, 5-day self-quarantine for all DLIFLC employees traveling outside the 60-mile-radius “protection bubble” appears to be inconsistent with yesterday's announced unconditional return to classroom instruction – just 4 days from now.
- 3.) The military's 2nd academic facility in Monterey, the Naval Post-graduate School (NPS), which is currently on a **“maximum Telework”** status, announced yesterday that for the safety of its personnel it will **not be returning** to in-class learning for the foreseeable future. (Please refer to the enclosed announcements of 31 DEC 2021 and 13 JAN 22, which also **mention the NPS's COVID “zero-transmission” rate.**)

4.) For the last week, the Union has received reports from DLI staff/faculty members about “unwell” DLI employees who continue coming to work either because they have no sick/annual leave, and/or they are unwilling to admit their symptoms could indicate that they are COVID-positive. **(These colleagues apparently refuse to be tested.)”**

Furthermore, to be perfectly clear ...

‘... by “**Provisional Telework**” we mean permitting DLIFLC’s staff/faculty to **work from home** -- with the faculty teaching their students using the MS-Teams platform; nearly all of them have extensive experience with MS-Teams, so the only “learning curve” will be that of the students, who – as we know – are extremely quick at learning such new technical applications.

Additionally:

Provisional Telework should be **reviewed, each week**, through a **Union-Agency meeting** in order **to determine whether it is safe** for personnel to return to classroom teaching on the following week.”

Respectfully,



Dennis Hickman, M.Ed.

Local President

AFGE Local 1263

AFGE1263@gmail.com

See NPS’s Telework announcement letters, below,

From: CAPT Philip E. Old, Chief of Staff

Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2022

Subject: COVID Mitigation Plan Update #4 ...from CAPT Philip E. Old, Chief of Staff

BLUF: NPS will remain in Distance Learning and Maximize Telework. In person for Labs/Classified Courses (SCIF/STBL)/Pre-approved meetings w/i capacity restrictions

As I am sure all of you are aware, our local Monterey community continues to see a rising trend in community transmission and NPS has observed an elevated positive COVID-19 cases rate amongst our population. In light of the data and current trends, we will maintain on our current course and not return to full in-person learning or normalized workplace occupancy next Tuesday.

The good news is that NPS' streak of zero transmission on campus is still alive. Thank you for your continued diligence in executing our mitigation measures.

President Rondeau and the rest of the leadership team remain committed to returning to in-person learning. Consistent with DOD and Navy guidance in response to COVID, we will continue to monitor the conditions and make a prudent and objective determination based on conditions, including a consistent reduction in community transmission.

To recap:

- Maximize telework if at all possible
- Distance Learning for classes w/exception of labs and classified courses
- Masks required indoors
- No in-person meetings with more than 4 people unless pre-approved
- **STAY HOME IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS**

As a public service announcement, CALMED at the POM medical clinic has Pfizer vaccine/booster available with 24 slots available for the next two weeks. Authorized beneficiaries may call the appointment line for scheduling COVID vaccination: 1-866-957-2256.

A gentle reminder that if you become COVID-19 positive, you need to report it to NPS. Please utilize the procedures and information linked below and at our [Coronavirus](#) website that has a myriad of good information and resources.

And did I mention to please stay home if you have symptoms of a cold, flu, or other illness?

v/r,
CAPT Philip E. Old
Chief of Staff, Naval Postgraduate School

(See NPS's earlier, 12/31/21, Telework announcement, below.)

From: Chief of Staff
Sent: Friday, December 31, 2021 10:29 AM
Subject: COVID Mitigation Plan **Update #3**

NPS Team,

BLUF: NPS will switch to Distance Learning immediately

Unfortunately but not unexpectedly, we continue to see an increasing rate of positive COVID-19 cases. 15 new positive cases reported yesterday bringing the total number of people in isolation to 40 as of yesterday evening.

At this point, I wouldn't characterize that as anything close to a crisis but in order to preserve the limited medical capacity at the CalMed clinic on POM and out of an abundance of caution, we will be switching to Distance Learning modality starting on Monday for at least through the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. Hopefully, we will be able to switch back after that but that will be a future decision by President Rondeau.

Everything else remains the same:

- maximize telework if at all possible (and now is a good time for civilian employees to ensure your telework agreement is current)
- masks required indoors
- no in-person meetings with more than 4 people (prudence dictates to just hold them virtually)
- stay home if you have symptoms of illness (if in doubt, sit it out!)

Base services will remain open and there is no intention of curtailing or closing them with the caveat that positive cases in their workforce may necessitate a change.

And while I have your attention, I strongly encourage you to get a COVID-19 booster shot if you are 6 months past your second Pfizer/Moderna vaccine dose or 2 months past your J&J dose.

Please see our web page <https://nps.edu/web/safety/nps-covid-procedures> for more information and repasting the links for what to do in the event of a positive case.

[I am COVID 19 Positive or a Close Contact Aug 21.pdf](#)

[NPS COVID 19 Positive Case Procedures 05Aug21.pdf](#)

As always, we greatly appreciate your flexibility, agility and responsiveness as NPS rises to the challenge of accomplishing our mission in a dynamic environment!

v/r,

CAPT Philip E. Old
Chief of Staff, Naval Postgraduate School

What your Union is doing for DLI's Staff and Faculty members:

1. We will be meeting with the DLI administration **on Tuesday** to Bargain again for FULL Telework;
2. We are searching **BOTH** for local COVID Testing facilities which are NOT overwhelmed **AND** for reliable suppliers of better (and more affordable) Omicron-protective masks.
3. TOMORROW (Sunday) afternoon, we are sending you our survey about your COVID situation in the workplace. **PLEASE complete that survey** as soon as possible, **SO** that we will have **your data** to bring to the Telework Bargaining meeting on Tuesday.
4. Gathering more information on Children's (Ages 5+) Vaccination Program of Montage Health, **this Monday**.



Montage Health invites community members ages 5 and older to get a first, second, additional, or booster COVID-19 vaccine in a convenient, safe, and friendly environment. See a list of current vaccine clinics below.

<https://www.montagehealth.org/patient-family-resources/covid/vaccines/clinics/>

Monday, January 17, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Location: Embassy Suites Ballroom, 1441 Canyon del Rey, Seaside

Friday, January 28, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Location: Del Monte Shopping Center (former Macy's Furniture store), 1410 Del Monte Ctr, Monterey

**Newsletter-26 (part 1) will be further supplemented
this Monday with more-detailed information.**

Working together we are stronger.

AFGE Local 1263 represents bargaining-unit employees of:

- * The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC)**
- * The Presidio of Monterey (PoM Garrison)**
- * California Medical Detachment (CalMed)**
- * Network Enterprise Center (NEC-PoM)**
- * Army/Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES-Monterey)**