

## Questions

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### COVID-Related Questions .....2

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Please explain why Chairman Burghoff [sic] and several members of the Board of Trustees are allowed to violate the Protect Purdue Pledge by not wearing masks during BOT meetings when the Pledge clearly states that masks must be worn "any time another person is in the room." .....2

Has there been any follow-up on COVID vaccine excusal notices for those who feel sick after getting their vaccines? .....2

### January Term-Related Questions .....3

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### Insurance Coverage of Prescription Drugs .....3

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## **COVID-Related Questions**

**While there is currently little evidence on the long-term protection afforded by current vaccines, there is discussion in the community it may be around 6 months of effective protection. As we move into more normal times, it is clear that faculty need to get back onto the world stage and attend conferences and present our work. In-person conferences allow faculty and students to better network, interact with companies for developing technologies, and facilitate engagement. Will Purdue consider offering COVID vaccine booster shots around the August-September timeframe?**

Beyond the information generally available to the public, we are aware of no reports of a maximum term of efficacy of the current vaccines. Both Pfizer and Moderna have reported that their vaccines remain effective at least six months following a second dose, not that six months is the maximum efficacy. Other than announcements that both companies are working on boosters to address variants, we are aware of no information beyond what is known to the general public. As we have done throughout the pandemic, our policies will remain flexible to accommodate emerging science. Assuming availability, we would strive to offer boosters when and if available.

**Upon what science is the University relying to state that full-capacity classrooms in the fall are safe when the CDC, the county health department, and numerous other health sources currently disagree?**

All considerations pertaining to the density of classrooms, events, and other university spaces are reviewed by Purdue's Medical Advisory Team, Purdue's Chief Medical Officer, and university officials charged with administering public safety. We are in frequent communication with the Tippecanoe County Health Commissioner. Plans are being made based on where we anticipate being in terms of new cases and risk of exposure and serious illness. There will always be the option to pivot to more stringent restrictions if the science and medical experts advise as such.

**Please explain why Chairman Burghoff [sic] and several members of the Board of Trustees are allowed to violate the Protect Purdue Pledge by not wearing masks during BOT meetings when the Pledge clearly states that masks must be worn "any time another person is in the room."**

All individuals seated at the table and those in the audience wore masks throughout the duration of the Trustees' meeting, with one exception. When providing extended reports, speakers were allowed to remove their masks to facilitate hearing by those in attendance, as well as those listening to the live stream.

**Has there been any follow-up on COVID vaccine excusal notices for those who feel sick after getting their vaccines?**

The university does not plan to provide "excused absences" for students who have side effects from the COVID vaccine. Students should consider their individual circumstances, including their academic schedule, and take personal responsibility in scheduling their vaccinations around critical deadlines and exams. Side effects, particularly after the second dose, which can include fever or fatigue, generally subside within a day. Second vaccine doses need to be administered 21 to 42 days after the first dose, allowing students considerable opportunity to schedule around academic priorities.

## January Term-Related Questions

**The PSG has overwhelmingly voted against the proposed January Term. The Senate's Educational Policy Committee also seems to be expressing concerns about introducing a January Term in the 2021-2022 academic year. After soliciting responses in my own unit, I have yet to have a single faculty member show support. If the University Senate votes against the EPC proposal today, how will the administration proceed?**

It is our understanding that the PSG surveyed students regarding a January Term and received 4,162 responses. To the question, "As of now, how likely would you be to participate in a J-Term?," 52% indicated they would be, "somewhat likely/extremely likely." Participation in January Term will be completely voluntary for faculty and students, alike. Those who are eager for such an opportunity, especially students, should have it.

## Insurance Coverage of Prescription Drugs

**Many colleagues are expressing significant concerns about the changes in insurance. Prescription drug costs have gone up substantially this year. The HSA plans means people who were on PPOs are experiencing significant out-of-pocket expenses. Those who were using the PPO plan most likely were doing so because they have more medical expenses than most. This is a significant struggle.**

*This question was asked by the University Senate in February 2021. What follows is the answer provided at that time.*

Response from Bill Bell, Vice President of Human Resources:

There are several factors that can impact an employee (or medical plan member) experience with the medical and prescription plan. Here are several items to note that could be playing a part in the experience of individuals:

The first factor is the medical plan employees are enrolled in. As announced in 2019, the PPO plan was eliminated starting in 2021. There is a difference in deductibles from a PPO plan to a consumer driven health plan (CDHP). In preparing for that difference, HR Benefits did the following:

Provided a CDHP that had the lowest, IRS-allowable deductible

Front loaded the entire university HSA contribution in January 2021

Provided individual counseling for those employees who were enrolled in a PPO plan in 2020 to help them prepare for the transition (i.e., encouraged the saved premium to be placed in their HSA to be used in 2021)

A second factor is that deductible and out-of-pocket levels reset (back to \$0) each January. It is possible that an employee (or their family member) paid less at the end of 2020 than they did in January due to having already met their 2020 deductible or out-of-pocket maximum.

Another factor is the prescription plan. The prescription plan (and how members pay) for CDHPs has not changed since 2018, when the university moved to CVS Caremark as our carrier. Prescription costs can be dependent on the carrier and have been known to change month-to-month with little-to-no notice to the consumer. As a result of the increase or variation in cost of prescriptions, HR Benefits has implemented the following:

RxSavings – a concierge service for members, implemented in 2020, to tell them how they can save money on their prescriptions. This is a free service to members and once registered, members will get notified of saving opportunities as well as have the ability to look up prescriptions in order to save.

Archimedes – a specialty prescription provider, HR Benefits implemented this carrier in 2021, to support members who are on specialty prescriptions. Archimedes supports members and their providers to find clinically appropriate prescriptions at cost effective pricing.

HR Benefits has not been made aware of any significant drug cost increases moving into 2021. The experiences provided are likely due to the transition to a CDHP or the reset of the deductible in January.

As always, individuals with specific questions or concerns are encouraged to contact a member of the benefits team either via phone (765) 494-2222 or email [hr@purdue.edu](mailto:hr@purdue.edu) or [www.purdue.edu/hrhelp](http://www.purdue.edu/hrhelp) (for secure of sensitive matters).