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## HIGHER EDUCATION AGENCIES RELEASE UPDATED GUIDANCE TO FACILITATE SAFE RETURN TO COLLEGE CAMPUSES THIS FALL

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) today are releasing higher education [guidance](#) in line with recently released guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This joint guidance will help facilitate the safe transition back to campus, as more students in Illinois and across the country have returned to in-person learning.

IBHE and ICCB are issuing this guidance to protect the public health of students, campuses and local communities. The guidance addresses the use of face masks, hand hygiene, cleaning, symptom screening, housing, and events. In accordance with the CDC, this guidance updates that previously issued by IBHE and ICCB.

“This guidance follows recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to ensure students can safely return to campus this fall. We are strongly encouraging universities to require vaccination to protect their campus and local communities as they bring students back for a full campus experience” **said Ginger Ostro, Executive Director, IBHE.** “We urge students to continue on their path through postsecondary education. Now more than ever a college degree or credential is the path to a better future. We know many things have been difficult during the pandemic. Students should feel confident campuses will be safe when they return and know there are resources available to help them.”

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“This updated guidance provides significant flexibility for community colleges as they consider their own local context, allowing them to fully reopen in the fall while also keeping the safety and well-being of their students, faculty and staff at the forefront,” **said Brian Durham, Executive Director ICCB.**

Phase 5 is the final stage of the five-phased Restore Illinois plan, that helped reopen Illinois guided by health metrics. Due to the power of the lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine, on June 11, 2021, the State of Illinois advanced to a full reopening of all businesses and activities. In Phase 5, fully vaccinated individuals can resume activities without wearing a mask except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations.

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