

August 24, 2021

Dear Patrick, Janet, and Gabe:

We want to start by thanking you for your efforts leading the university during this especially difficult time. As a follow-up to the recent conversations with UA regarding the in-person plans for fall, we are writing to petition the administration to **allow caregivers of unvaccinated children (all children under 12) to continue to teach and attend meetings online at least until their family members receive the vaccine.**

We fully support the current vaccination requirement for all faculty, staff, and students and are pleased to know that over 96 percent of those who have reported their vaccination status, have received the vaccine. However, while for most people vaccinations have provided a way to safely return to their workplace and resume most of their normal daily activities, caregivers for young children have had little reprieve. As you are aware, children under 12 remain ineligible for vaccination against COVID-19. As the number of breakthrough delta cases dramatically increases among fully vaccinated adults, and pediatric COVID cases soar, in-person activities—including large in-person instruction with no possibility for social distancing—pose a serious risk to faculty caregivers and their unvaccinated children. Though the university has provided a disability accommodation mechanism to modify in-person responsibilities for those with medical needs (deadline on 9/17), this procedure does not accommodate the challenges faced by caregivers of unvaccinated children.

According to the most recent reports, children 5-11 years of age will not be eligible for vaccines until the end of 2021 and children under the age of 5 will not be eligible until early 2022. Data shows that children 3 and under are especially vulnerable given the intimacy of care that they require, and the fact that they cannot wear masks, leading infants and toddlers to transmit the virus at much higher rates than teens

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/16/health/covid-kids-toddlers-transmission.html>. As per the most recent data, nationally more children are hospitalized with COVID-19 now than at any other point of the pandemic: an average of 276 each day (see <https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/us/politics/coronavirus-school-vaccinations.html> ;!!C5qS4YX3!Uh-o8nX1A3Cv1mcx3MWYJrQ3x42kmjblFJbXDZNZ1uO528ikf2_JQ2NAwPeiLC4\$).

In Oregon, the situation is dire. On August 21 increasing COVID-19 hospitalizations, including pediatric hospitalizations, compelled Lane County to issue an emergency guidance indicating all ICU beds are full (<https://www.klcc.org/post/breaking-diminishing-hospital-capacity-prompts-emergency-covid-19-guidance-lane-county> also see <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/lane-oregon-covid-cases.html>). Pediatricians



are advising parents to modify their activities to match those of February 2020 and avoid any activities that could result in child injury.

While our request is to allow flexibility for caregivers of unvaccinated children while they remain ineligible for a vaccine, we acknowledge that the caregiver challenges associated with the pandemic will not be resolved with the vaccine authorization for children under 12. School and daycare closures will continue to occur until the public health emergency has subsided. As noted by the UA, we must be proactive, and be ready to respond to new breakthrough infections and quarantining requirements for employees and their families in the months to come. We urge the university to continue its effort to providing reasonable workplace accommodations to its employees and building a safe, caring, and supporting environment for all.

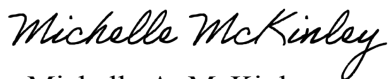
Sincerely,



Maria Fernanda Escallón
Assistant Professor, Convener CSWS Caregiver Campaign
Department of Anthropology



Lynn Stephen
Phillip H Knight Chair
Distinguished Professor
Department of Anthropology



Michelle A. McKinley
Director, CSWS
Bernard B. Kliks Professor of Law

