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For Immediate Release

The University of Alabama System has updated the COVID-19 data dashboard that went live Monday, August 24. The data includes results from the three UA System campuses: UA, UAB and UAH as well as the clinical enterprise. Statistics released today:

Student testing:	System-wide 492 positives since last report
Faculty and staff:	System-wide 51 positives since last report
Isolation rate:	29.5% of current designated space occupied

At this point, no COVID-positive students at UA, UAB or UAH are hospitalized and there is a high overall vacancy rate (70+%) in UA System isolation spaces.

“Sentinel and for-cause testing following entry testing is a key pillar of our UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan,” UA System Chancellor Finis St. John said today: “We have the most robust testing regimen of any entity in the state, giving us a clear picture of virus spread and informing our decisions. Fortunately, our isolation occupancy is below capacity, and the number will be adjusted as students complete the isolation period. We are closely monitoring our data daily, and we will continue to adjust operations as the situation warrants.”

Dr. Ricky Friend, Dean of the College of Community Health Sciences at UA, added: “Our exposure notification efforts have revealed no evidence of virus transmission due to in-person class instruction. We remain satisfied that the precautions implemented prior to the resumption of classes – including masking, distancing, and a blend of in-person and remote instruction – are appropriate and effective.”

In his statement, Chancellor St. John thanked the three UA System campus presidents and their teams for round-the-clock efforts over the past five months to enact health and safety measures. He emphasized that every student on the three campuses has the option of moving to fully online instruction at any time, remaining either on campus or returning home to continue their academic course work.

Emphasizing the importance of behavioral compliance with public health guidelines, Dr. Selwyn Vickers, Dean of the School of Medicine at UAB and co-chair of the UA System Health and Safety Task Force, said today, “With all the efforts and tools we have provided college campuses for safe entry, none are more crucial than students following the basic public health principles of social distancing, wearing masks and avoiding large groups.”

Chancellor St. John thanked Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox and city officials for their announcement Monday to close bars for two weeks. “We remain concerned that off-campus transmission is our greatest risk, which is why we asked Mayor Maddox to consider that action. We thank him for making that difficult decision to protect our campus community and Tuscaloosa.”

Because it takes several days after exposure for an individual to test positive, benefits of the bar-closing measure and other compliance strategies will not be reflected in testing data for several more days.

This week UAB President Ray Watts announced a program encouraging businesses in areas near the campus to take a pledge supporting students and requiring masks, social distancing, crowd control and other proven safety strategies. <https://www.uab.edu/uabunited/additional-resources/business-pledge>