



HIGHER HEALTH

Higher Education & Training: Health, Wellness and Development Centre

Company Registration Number: 2017/419731/08 | NPO Number: 204-047NPO

262 Rose Avenue, Wild Olive Building, River Falls Office Park, Centurion, 0157 | P.O. Box 27392, Sunnyside, Pretoria, 0132,

T: +27 (012) 030 0113 www.higherhealth.ac.za

Dear Students and Colleagues

01 February 2022

Welcome to the 2022 academic year. Let it be an exciting time for you as you explore the whole new world that the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector has to offer.

As we enter a third year of COVID-19, we must face the reality of a profoundly changed world: from the way we live and work, how we interact with friends and family, to how we learn and study. Contact learning is expected to resume to almost pre-COVID-19 levels. This will help with getting diplomas and degrees on track to the benefit of not only you, but in large measure, your families, communities and ultimately our country.

As you know, COVID-19 remains with us as we begin the 2022 academic year. As the implementing agency of the Department of Higher Education and Training, HIGHER HEALTH will continue guiding institutions on the management of the pandemic to ensure that staff and students are safe, and that no student is left behind on the road to education. HIGHER HEALTH has capacitated over 35 000 frontline staff and academics, along with 14 000 student volunteers, who are supporting our institutions towards effectively managing COVID-19 through the best scientific knowledge, systems, and controls.

Currently, HIGHER HEALTH is consulting scientific experts as it draws up guidelines that institutions can follow in determining the various matters on requirements around vaccination. A comprehensive PSET sector vaccination strategy was released in July last year, which assisted our system to establish infrastructure towards easy access to vaccines for all students and staff across institutions. To date, 19 universities are accredited vaccination sites. All 50 Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges, as well as the remaining seven universities, have established vaccine points where vaccines are given to all our students and staff on-campus, making for easy access for vaccination. The spectrum of Community Education and Training colleges and their centres have been linked by HIGHER HEALTH to more than 2 000 of the nearest workplace vaccination sites, where priority vaccinations are made possible for all students and staff.

Science has clearly shown that vaccine-induced immunity assists you to fight COVID-19, and prevents severe

Improving wellbeing. Inspiring success.

Directors: W de Villiers (Chairperson), A Bawa, M Mabizela, T Mayekiso, SJ Mlotshwa, N Phaswana-Mafuya, A Singh, D Tromp, B Madalane, R Ahluwalia (CEO)





HIGHER HEALTH

Higher Education & Training: Health, Wellness and Development Centre

Company Registration Number: 2017/419731/08 | NPO Number: 204-047NPO

262 Rose Avenue, Wild Olive Building, River Falls Office Park, Centurion, 0157 | P.O. Box 27392, Sunnyside, Pretoria, 0132,

T: +27 (012) 030 0113 www.higherhealth.ac.za

illness, hospitalisations, and death. If you vaccinate, it will be far safer for you to fight COVID-19, that spreads much faster in closed congregate settings, which you will encounter during your education in the PSET system. Our education system was designed mostly for in-contact teaching and learning, and for our skills' economy it is critical that we encourage more students to utilise the in-contact skills' learning which is now possible through vaccinations.

I want to appeal to students and staff, especially first-years, to use the HIGHER HEALTH *HealthCheck* daily, which is totally free, digital screening platform for COVID-19 symptoms and it's available in various languages on the web, via SMS or on WhatsApp. You can access the *HealthCheck* app by using one of the following three options:

1. Go to <http://healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za>
2. Dial *134*832*2#
3. Add to your WhatsApp Contacts: 0600 11 00 00)

HealthCheck has enabled millions of students and staff to screen themselves daily before leaving home, and to only leave home if they are not showing any symptoms as indicated in the *HealthCheck*. Between the start of the service from May 2020 until 11 January 2022, there were 16 933 058 daily passports that were issued for COVID-19, risk-free entrance to our campuses.

According to *HealthCheck*, 1 015 756 vaccination responses were received between October last year and 11 January 2022. The data is telling us that 167 293 were partially vaccinated, and 408 986 were fully vaccinated, meaning 56.73% of our sector population has had at least one vaccination. Let me take this opportunity to encourage all those of you who have not yet vaccinated to please do so. The evidence is clear. Even if you do get COVID-19, your symptoms will not be as severe so your risk of hospitalisation or at worse, death, will be significantly lower.

It is important especially for our first-year students to know that no matter how uncertain they are during their first few weeks on-campus, psychosocial care, counselling and essential health and wellness services are always available on your doorstep. HIGHER HEALTH runs a second, extramural curriculum programme on

Improving wellbeing. Inspiring success.

Directors: W de Villiers (Chairperson), A Bawa, M Mabizela, T Mayekiso, SJ Mlotshwa, N Phaswana-Mafuya, A Singh, D Tromp, B Madalane, R Ahluwalia (CEO)





HIGHER HEALTH

Higher Education & Training: Health, Wellness and Development Centre

Company Registration Number: 2017/419731/08 | NPO Number: 204-047NPO

262 Rose Avenue, Wild Olive Building, River Falls Office Park, Centurion, 0157 | P.O. Box 27392, Sunnyside, Pretoria, 0132,

T: +27 (012) 030 0113 www.higherhealth.ac.za

campus that ensures knowledge transfer beyond the official curriculum on essential matters that affect our youth in our country, which includes HIV, gender based violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol, contraceptives and sexual reproductive health, disability, LGBTQI+, human rights and other health and wellness issues that will challenge you during the transition from school, peer-to-peer influence, and a new environment outside the care of parents/guardians. HIGHER HEALTH will take care of providing routine easy access to essential health, wellness, and psychosocial services.

Gender based violence remains a pandemic on its own. There are PSET GBV policy guidelines and protocols in place on campuses, with other plans in motion for this year. Equally, mental health remains an absolute priority so there is psychosocial assistance to students in need of help. 0800 36 36 36 is the HIGHER HEALTH tollfree, 24-hour support and crisis helpline. At no cost to you, an experienced team of counsellors, psychologists, and other care workers, is available to assist you and manage your wellbeing.

Together we will fulfil our vision to improving graduate success rates and study completion by enhancing overall health and psychosocial wellbeing.

I wish you all the very best for the 2022 academic year. May you enjoy good health and wellness on the road to academic success.

Stay well, stay safe.

Dr (Prof) Ramneek Ahluwalia

CEO: HIGHER HEALTH

Improving wellbeing. Inspiring success.

Directors: W de Villiers (Chairperson), A Bawa, M Mabizela, T Mayekiso, SJ Mlotshwa, N Phaswana-Mafuya, A Singh, D Tromp, B Madalane, R Ahluwalia (CEO)

