## **Travel Advisory Update – January 11, 2022**

With the emergence of the highly transmissible Omicron variant and a series of abruptly implemented travel restrictions and flight cancellations, UNC Chapel Hill temporarily paused reviewing new requests for exceptions to the System Office prohibition on international travel. As we now have more information available to assess risk and determine whether an exception to the ban on international travel should be granted, **UNC Chapel Hill has resumed reviewing requests for approval to undertake University-affiliated international travel.**

Because of the elevated risks of international travel while caseloads remain high (and, in some cases, strain health care systems) and international travelers face multiple challenges (including shifting entry restrictions, flight cancelations and testing requirements that can be hard to meet), UNC Chapel Hill has returned to the **highly restrictive travel policy** that was in place for the bulk of calendar year 2021. In addition, travelers are required to sign a revised release of liability document that includes the following language: “I acknowledge and understand that the University reserves the right to rescind any travel exception approval, or cancel or postpone travel in whole or in part . . ., which may adversely impact my ability to recover expenses associated with the travel.”

In general, travel will be considered particularly high risk to destinations where COVID caseloads are high, the vaccination rate is low, and access to adequate health care is in doubt.

*This policy will be evaluated at least monthly as the situation evolves. In the meantime, whether you are traveling or not, UNC’s infectious disease experts offer the following reminder:*

**“The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 including the Omicron variant is to be fully vaccinated (i.e., 2 doses of an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or 1 dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) PLUS, if eligible, a booster of an mRNA vaccine prior to international travel.” David Weber, MD**