December 30, 2020

Michael Zeleny
Chief of Staff and Associate to the Chancellor
University of Nebraska- Lincoln
201 ADMS
Lincoln, NE 68588

Dear Mr. Zeleny,

As you are aware the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) has been working collaboratively with the University of Nebraska throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. Looking forward to planning for the 2021 Spring semester, the LLCHD considered lessons learned from the Fall, evaluated COVID-19 testing strategies employed by other colleges across the nation, and reviewed updated guidance from the CDC.

LLCHD and UNL COVID Teams worked together to evaluate various testing options to ensure that as students from all across Nebraska, the nation, and the world returned in the Spring, the health of the community and that of University of Nebraska students, faculty, and staff was protected. The CDC has determined regular testing can reduce transmission of COVID-19.

LLCHD recommended that the University of Nebraska develop a mandatory testing strategy involving all students, faculty and staff using a saliva-based test. This would enhance the immediate identification of asymptomatic individuals upon return to the University of Nebraska – Lincoln campus, enabling more rapid response to stopping outbreaks before they occur, while reducing the need to quarantine large numbers of students. This strategy would also allow ongoing testing throughout the semester of the entire University of Nebraska community ensuring persons with COVID-19 are identified quickly and can isolate immediately preventing spread in the Lincoln and Lancaster County community.

For these reasons the LLCHD will require all University of Nebraska faculty, staff, and students in Lancaster County participating in on-campus instruction, activities, or employment to participate in the testing.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Patricia D. Lopez, MS, RN
Health Director