

Make Me Smart August 10, 2021 transcript

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Kimberly Adams: It's like magic.

Andy Uhler: On cue. Seriously. Thank you.

Kimberly Adams: Hi, I'm Kimberly Adams, welcome back to Make Me Smart where none of us is as smart as all of us.

Andy Uhler: Hey, everybody, I'm Andy Uhler. It's Tuesday, which means it's time for a deep dive into a single topic. Today we're going to talk about vaccine mandates or whatever politicians and CEOs want to call them to get around the legality of all this. It's the idea that companies say if you want to work for them, or if you want to use their services, you have to be vaccinated or show proof that, of exactly that, or a very recent negative COVID test. Right?

Kimberly Adams: Right. And because the federal government isn't requiring Americans to get the shot, although more and more federal employees are getting some heavy pressure, and the military is about to make folks do it, you know, we are seeing a growing list of businesses from Walmart to Google to United Airlines and CNN, I think, and restaurants around the country announcing that they're going to require vaccines for their employees, and in some cases, their customers. But of course, all that comes with a ton of caveats. And, you know, where will this vaccine push led by businesses, you know, will it change our COVID reality? Where will it go? Is it going to make things better in the fall? Fingers crossed. I don't know.

Andy Uhler: Exactly. And here to make us smart is Mia Sato. She is a reporter with MIT's Technology Review's Pandemic Technology Project. Mia, thanks so much for being here.

Mia Sato: Thank you so much for having me. It's my pleasure.

Andy Uhler: So, so what, what has sort of prompted this? It seems like, you know, I'm, obviously we've, we've all been dealing with this, with this for a while. What do you feel like prompted businesses to, to announce that they're going to require not only employees but also customers to sort of access services? Why does it feel like now is sort of the time that they're asserting this? What do you think?

Mia Sato: Yeah, I think there are, you know, a few elements that explain why we are starting to see this now more than we had in the last few months. So first, there's the legal side. In late May, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which is a federal agency created to

protect civil rights and watches for workplace discrimination on the job, issued guidance saying that employers can require a COVID-19 vaccine for physical workplaces. So that really cleared the way legally for employers to set up these policies that we're now starting to hear more about. So that's one side. The other side, I think, and sort of to me it explains why we didn't see it initially, is there's the profit element, right. So at first, I think there was a legitimate fear among business owners of potentially alienating customers, especially after such a tough year. When you're finally given the green light to do indoor dining, are you willing to turn away business? As an employer, are you willing to have staff quit because of a vaccine mandate? So there's that side of it. And then finally, I think, you know, the rise in Delta variant cases has been a wakeup call for employers and businesses. Amazon, which is the second largest private employer in the US, doesn't have a vaccine mandate, but it just reinstated a mask mandate at its warehouses. So, you know, those are, those are places that workers have been saying they were working in sort of grueling, dangerous conditions throughout the pandemic, and they got rid of the mask mandate, and now it's coming back. Walmart, we mentioned, the, the largest private employer, will require all corporate employees and management to get vaccinated. Google and Facebook will require anyone coming into the office to be vaccinated. So there's a lot of different things I think swirling at this moment. And, you know, I think people sort of are surprised given where the confidence we felt just a couple months ago, that now this is all happening you know, hot girl summer, hot vaccinated summer, all of that, but there's a lot of things going on. Yeah.

Kimberly Adams: Wistful for hot vax summer, yeah. Mia, I want to follow up with you on the Walmart example because I was really struck by that. Because, like you said, they're requiring the vaccines for office workers, but not necessarily those out on the floor at the stores or at distribution centers. You mentioned that Google is requiring it for people who come into the office. Look, at first when I heard that I'm like, well, that seems to just sort of entrench, you know, the sort of stereotypes about the groups likely and less likely to be vaccinated. But what is your take on that distinction and what that means for actually the scale of these company mandates actually getting more people vaccinated?

Mia Sato: Yeah, that's a really good question. And I think it's really important for people to think through, like, who are these mandates being placed on? And what are, what's the feasibility of, of getting people to comply with this? So with the Walmart, Walmart example, you know, we've all read the stories about fast food chains desperate for workers are paying more than they were before because the labor market, you know, there, there's a shortage of workers or workers, frankly, you know, willing to come back for minimum wage in dangerous conditions. So I think that, I think, you know, is, is an element that's hinting at that.

Kimberly Adams: I think we got to be specific, you mean, hinting at the idea that, you know, companies are making the assessment that lower wage workers are less likely to be willing to work if there's a vaccine requirement?

Mia Sato: Right, right. Like basically, they, they, I think they see it as just another thing that might prevent someone from taking a job or applying for a job at, you know, in these lower wage positions. I think also it, you know, in my last story that I did at Tech Review was about time off,

especially for hourly workers. Yeah, and, you know, that's the thing that a lot of people take for granted, if you have been working from home, if you're normally in the office but are now at home and you can pop out for a couple hours and get a vaccine, if you're sick, your boss understands and believes you, right, that you need that time off. But for hourly workers, that's not, you know, that's not really a reality for a lot of people. There's a recent survey that, that showed that just about 50% of workers have been offered time off to get a vaccine. So and, you know, it goes without saying or maybe, you know, maybe this is a surprise to some people, but—

Kimberly Adams: Go ahead and say it.

Mia Sato: People in these positions, people in these positions tend to be people of color. So there's an equity issue here, too. And so, yeah, I don't know if that answers your question. But I think it's a really important thing to talk about.

Andy Uhler: We also, Mia, have businesses asking customers to be vaccinated too, or sort of not allowing folks, you know, you hear about concerts, and, you know, either the artist or the venue saying, hey, if you're not vaccinated or you can't prove that you tested, you know, negative for the virus very recently, you're not coming to the show. Have you heard of sort of pushback, or, or sort of different instances or issues in places like New York, or, I know, that's fairly recent, but I'm curious about sort of, what you're hearing about customers being vaccinated too?

Mia Sato: Yeah, yeah. So actually, funny story. So New York State has had a COVID app, a COVID vaccine app for a few months already. First there was a New York State one, and now there's a new New York City one coming out, or that's out already. And I was vaccinated back in March, I think. And I tried to access my app shortly thereafter, and I couldn't get my app. I couldn't, I couldn't get my digital passport. I tried it like, so many times, and it ended up that they had incorrectly entered my name. And so yes, I'm vaccinated. Yes, I have proof. But, you know, it was this like tech—it was actually not a technology glitch, it was an input error from the vaccination site. So I've heard of things like that, people not being able to access their app. Obviously, it's, you need a smartphone to get it. So that is another barrier for some folks. And, you know, in New York, there will now be a requirement for all bars, restaurants, gyms, to have workers provide proof of vaccination and patrons. And so we have a couple—I think we have about a month to ramp up to when it's actually enforced, but it, you know, it could, it could move people. There is a portion of the unvaccinated public that say I'll get a vaccine if you make me. So, you know, like getting turned away from a bar, like you're 19 that might make some, you know, that might make some people.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, it seems like there's a feature of “let's annoy people into getting the vaccine.” You know, since we can't force folks to do it, either by making you constantly get a COVID test, or by making it more difficult to move around the world. But look, I was, my sister lives in New York and I was actually talking to her this morning and about how everybody is starting to mask up again. And she said, you know, everybody's happy to put a mask on, people

are sending out birthday invitations saying only vaccinated adults welcome and let us know if you're not so we can invite somebody else. It was so bad in New York. So publicly bad in the early days of the pandemic in New York that people seem to be, you know, game to do what they have to do. But how scalable are vaccine passports and these types of solutions, you know, from a privacy perspective, and also from just a social acceptance perspective around the rest of the country?

Mia Sato: Yeah, I mean, that's a big part of it too, is states are kind of doing their own thing. There are a bunch of states that have outright banned digital apps like this. And so it is a question, if you are a New Yorker and you travel to a state that has banned these apps, what do you do, there's not really a protection in place. I will say, you know, with all the issues going on, you know, people I think are willing to, they'll download the new app, they'll wear the mask, because as you said, it was, it was so bad last spring, it was really scary. But one thing I'll say is that, you know, the burden of checking now this, this new app, again, falls on the workers who previously were asked to make sure people stay six feet apart, make sure people mask up, you know, go into crowded workplaces and just work as if there isn't a pandemic. So it creates another thing for, you know, again, these low rate, low wage workers to carry out. And so there, there definitely are privacy, privacy questions. The New York State app has the, there's the ability to sort of scale up what the app actually does. And so I believe there's some money set out in the contract to add new fields to that the app collects. So you know, it's a, it's a huge question. It's a lot, there are a lot of unknowns, I think.

Andy Uhler: I'm curious, too, you talked about sort of different states doing different things. You also have municipalities, you have local governments doing different things. I live in Austin, Texas and what the mayor of Austin is telling us to do differs from what the governor is telling us to do, or sort of the, the, you know, the message or the mandates are different. At the same time, the local authorities have a lot of that control to sort of tell folks what needs to be done. I'm curious, sort of that pushback between states, between the feds, between municipalities? I'm sure that's a big part of this.

Mia Sato: Yeah, I mean, it's confusing, you know, I feel like we've been in this sort of swirling down a toilet for the last year and a half just with new, either new instructions, and not just, you know, what the government is telling you to do, if you're a worker, what your boss is telling you to do, what you see your coworkers doing, if you, you know, have the privilege to work at home, you sort of observe what your friends are doing, but everyone's risk calculation is different. So, you know, I have probably a different risk profile than my mother, or my younger siblings, or my friend who's immunocompromised, it's really tough. And people are, again, being asked to figure it out, you know, do the math for yourself and, and kind of taken what's going on around you at different levels of the government and find a solution that fits you best. And so that's a really, you know, that's a very, I think, a deeply scary place to be for people. It's very confusing.

Kimberly Adams: So if we see this continued rise in eligible, eligible people getting vaccinated in the US, maybe in, thanks in part to the work that private companies are doing to encourage their employees and customers to get vaccinated, does that actually help? Does it change the

COVID outlet, outlook for us? I mean, how does it factor in giving that we've got like, new scary variants all the time?

Mia Sato: Mmhmm. Yeah. Well, you know, we can look to a few places, I think, for hints at what mandates could do. So in France and Italy, which have similar mandates to New York, appointment uptake was really, you know, boomed after it was announced that you would now need to show proof that you were vaccinated to go do all these fun things. So we're, I think the jury is still out, we're still trying to figure out if it will have a similar effect in the places in the US that are implementing mandates, so that's sort of like, wait and see. But I think, you know, like I said, there is a portion of those people that are open to a vaccine with the right conditions. So, you know, I keep thinking, we've talked a lot about like, vaccine hesitancy and the people who it just takes, you know, takes a carrot or it takes \$100 Visa gift card, whatever it is to get there and, and I think a lot about like, what are the other avenues that we haven't explored that could work for someone? I was talking to an expert for a story a few months ago, and she said she had a, she had been interviewing people who were hesitant initially and then decided to get vaccinated. And for one person, the only thing that did it was seeing, going to the ER for something unrelated to COVID and seeing all the COVID patients like, that's, that was, that was what it took. So there are, there are those conversations that I think still are yet to be had that, that push people over the edge and then finally they get a vaccine. There are more material conditions like paid time off, I'm afraid I'll lose my job if I, if I'm out of work for three days because I'm sick. There are practical things like, you know, if you're a single parent and you work until into the evening, do you have childcare? Is there a place nearby that you can walk to to get a vaccine? So, you know, there are lots of different things going on. But the, I think mandates are a stick they call it, right, stick and carrot. So it's a stick, stick sort of like push people and hit people to get it. But I think one thing that I always ask myself is, are there the barriers that are then in front of the people, so even if you are pushing them, is there something that makes it kind of, you know, just even, even just marginally more difficult to get a vaccine? And I think the answer is yes.

Andy Uhler: Mia Sato is a reporter with MIT Technology Review's Pandemic Technology Project. Mia, thank you so much for making us smart about this.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, thanks, Mia. This was really interesting.

Mia Sato: Thank you for having me. Bye.

Kimberly Adams: Wow, that was super fascinating.

Andy Uhler: That was great. Thank you. Yeah.

Kimberly Adams: You know, I just wonder if all of these different things seem to be sort of nibbling at the edges of the group of people who are not yet vaccinated? Because like Mia said, there are certain people who just need the right incentive to choose to get vaccinated. But there are other folks who just hardcore refuse, there's nothing you can say or do. And what, what

then, if that remains? And then if we want to sort of broaden it way out, you know, if you listen to the folks at the WHO and scientists all over the world, they're saying that as long as there are whole countries with very limited access to the vaccine, or that won't get their populations vaccinated until late into next year, the pandemic and COVID is still going to have a place to keep creating these new variants that, you know, even the vaccinated are going to struggle to keep up with. So if we get everyone vaccinated here in the US, and this is where that debate about the booster shots come in, you know, the WHO, World Health Organization, is asking sort of the wealthier countries not to do booster shots until the rest of the world can get vaccinated, but how do we catch up? Or do we even ever catch up?

Andy Uhler: Well, and sort of carrot and stick, right, like Mia was talking about, I think that's, that's exactly sort of part of it, it's trying to figure out is this, do we incentivize folks to get the vaccine? Do we sort of force them by taking away privileges and taking away sort of things that they can do? And again, we sort of, you know, I remember you and I probably a year ago talking about herd immunity and things like that. And what you're speaking to is herd immunity within the United States, right? Like, can I travel to a different state? Can I, can I go somewhere? If you're talking about worldwide, and you need countries to catch up and get folks vaccinated to sort of achieve that, that's going to take a while, this is going to be our reality for a hot minute. And it's a bummer but, but that's, that's sort of what we're working with.

Kimberly Adams: And that's worth a whole other conversation about what that reality is going to look like and what it means for all of us to just adapt to the COVID world because we're going to be here for a while. And on that pleasant note, we are headed to a break. So send us your comments on today's show. You can do that by sending us an email or a voice memo to makemesmart@marketplace.org

Andy Uhler: You can also call us and leave us a voice message, our new number is 508-827-6278, also known as 508-UB-SMART.

Kimberly Adams: Alright, it's time for the news fix. Andy, why don't you go first, because yours is newsier.

Andy Uhler: It's very newsy. And I think I'm excited. I think I'm optimistic about it. The Senate just passed that infrastructure bill, right? We still have to, of course you know this better than I do, we don't know what the house is gonna do. We have to wait on sort of what this means. I think for me, this is sort of the first step, right, because you have all of this money, it's trillions of dollars in, in tax dollars sort of going to, you know, bridges and things like that. I'm curious, and I'm curious what, what you're sort of thinking about too, about the different things that are, you know, we have seven and a half billion dollars in EV charging technology and infrastructure there. Different sort of things and I keep thinking about this because it's so big and it's so much money. I'm thinking about sort of the next phase, right, I guess I'm already there. What this is actually going to look like.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, I mean, a couple of caveats. It's not trillions of dollars, it's like a trillion dollars, which is not a small amount of money, but it's still big. I think when you're thinking trillions of dollars, you're thinking about that \$3.2 trillion by, budget reconciliation plan that the Senate Democrats put in, and you mentioned that this all has to go through the House. And, you know, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has said they're not even going to really look at this infrastructure bill until they also get that budget resolution, and the budget resolution, the reason that's separate and has all of these democratic priorities is because the budget resolution is what democrats can pass with a simple, simple majority in the Senate so the bipartisan infrastructure bill has a trillion-dollar roads and bridges as sort of traditional hard infrastructure, the more human infrastructure, which is like anti-poverty, and then also sort of some of the climate initiatives, live in that budget resolution that they're hoping they can push through with just Democratic support. So yes, I'm encouraged to see a bipartisan anything make it out of the Senate, because the Senate seems to be where things go to die, because of a variety of reasons, mainly, you know, political entrenchment, but that's another thing.

Andy Uhler: Um, so what are you thinking about?

Kimberly Adams: I'll be, I'm just fascinated to watch if this actually works, this is a gamble, because the Democrats are kind of pinning this leverage play. And this is what is going to create the narratives and talking points headed into the 2022 midterm elections. And, you know, if you pay attention to the political polling, which I'm amazed that any of us do given recent history, the Democrats in the House in particular are kind of in trouble, and they're really worried about losing their majority. So how this turns out, nobody wants to give the other side a win. And so there's a very complicated political game here being played with trillions of dollars of taxpayer money and with policies that really are going to matter for people's lives and for the economy. And so I'm just watching with interest, the whole thing. You have another one, right?

Andy Uhler: I do. I do. I've been sort of thinking about this a bunch because the state of Texas, the governor has just said that he's asking for folks from out of state to come and help take care of people with COVID-19. We don't have enough health care workers here in Texas to help folks who have COVID-19. That is a very, very exaggerated sigh because the difficulty here is the governor has been sort of out in front, along with the governor of Florida, about sort of being the first state to open back up, right. And all businesses are open and holding press conferences and appearing on Fox News all the time, talking about liberty in Texas and things like that. And now we're asking folks from other states to come and help take care of folks. We don't have enough ICU beds in a lot of cities. Laredo has two ICU beds right now. It's, it's bad news. And so it's tough, right, sort of the messaging from the state is everything's great, everything's back open. Don't worry about it. We're not mandating anything, don't worry about masks, don't worry about sort of social distancing. And then you're going and asking folks to come in and help take care of the sick from other states. It's just, it's a tough one, right, sort of, sort of watching this play out is, is it's a real bummer.

Kimberly Adams: Well, and, and healthcare workers are exhausted because many of them never got any kind of break. I can remember all the health care workers rushing to New York at

the start of the pandemic, but they've been going nonstop ever since. And, you know, I, I keep seeing doctors and healthcare workers on social media warning people that in these places where there are no ICU beds, that means if you get into a really bad car accident, that, or you have a heart attack or some other catastrophe for your health, you are going to struggle to get the quality of care that you would otherwise, because that bed is just not going to be available to you. And that's, that's pretty grim. But apparently--

Andy Uhler: If my home--no, I was gonna, I was gonna say, you have, you have some ideas from, from your neck of the woods, right? Your hometowns or home state, at least.

Kimberly Adams: My home state, my home state, so I am on the press release distribution list for the United States Postal Service, because things have been quite interesting there the last year or so. And so I got a press release about the stamp that they just issued, marking the bicentennial of Missouri being admitted to the, as the 24th state in the union, August 10, 1821. And this stamp has a very pretty picture of a historic mill called Bollinger's Mill and the Burfordville Covered Bridge, and it's a beautiful photo and like, very nostalgia Missouri. However, I was reading this and I saw that, you know, "Bollinger's Mill was built along the White Rock, Whitewater River shoreline, some in the early 1800s," and all this other, you know, information about this mill, and I was like, well wait a second, 1800s Missouri, who built that? You know, this is what I think anytime I see any sort of historic thing from that time period that is large, I'm immediately thinking was this built by enslaved persons? And I would think that that would be important information to include, also in acknowledging the Bicentennial, and the fact that it was a 24th state in the union and the fact that, you know, the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 is, is what gave a lot of these settlers this land and allowed it to be part of the United States, that there might be some mention of the Native American tribes that were displaced at the time in order to make this happen. So I did some digging and found out that indeed, the original mill was built, or at least partially built, by enslaved persons, the first couple of owners did own slaves, and also left out of the press release was the fact that the Union Army burnt down the mill during the Civil War because they were worried about it supplying food to the Confederate Army. And I was able to get some of this information from the actual Historic Site website, but also I called up the people who work there and they were happy to share the information about the role of enslaved people there as far as they know. But, you know, the very helpful person there said, you know, we're happy to give people what information we have, but there weren't the best records kept. We don't know a lot of this information isn't featured. They're doing a big construction project right now and she said some of the workers are sometimes like, how did they build this way back then? And she was like, slave labor. And this type of stuff is an opportunity to have a more inclusive history of this country. And I was really bummed to see that the Native American history was left out here and the role of enslaved persons was left out here, even though that information is available. It's a beautiful photo, love my home state. But as I think about what it means to be more inclusive and the racial air quote reckoning that we've been having in this country, it's not just about what we do right now, but also in terms of how we choose to remember and tell people about our own history. And this gets back into that critical race theory fight that's happening in a lot of places and what gets erased. You would not have had this mill, that man and his family would not have been successful throughout history if not

for the labor that they used. So pretty stamp. I was a little disappointed in the incomplete history. But that's it for the news fix. Unless you have thoughts. I know you do.

Andy Uhler: No, no, no, I think, I think yeah, I mean, I'm sort of sitting here, you can't see me, but I am nodding the entire time you're talking about these things. Because you're right, having that conversation is, is, that's part of it, right? And this opportunity to sort of tell that complete story, or at least part of that complete story was missed. Hey, let's do the mailbag.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, last week we got a little update from my uncle Davids which led to a conversation. The birthday party was great, by the way. It led to a conversation about the term "nibbling," n-i-b-l-i-n-g, as I understand it, which is a gender neutral term for nieces and nephews. Emily in Minneapolis sent us this.

Emily: I was so delighted that Kimberly brought up the term "nibblings," because this is something I use all the time and nobody believes that it's a real thing. I had one niece and one nephew born in July, bringing my total nibbling count up to seven, and being an aunt is one of my favorite things. I thought you also might like to know that you can call your aunts and uncles "siblings." But that might be a bridge too far. So anyway, while you're making smart happen, can you also see if you can make nibbling happen? Thanks.

Kimberly Adams: I feel like I'm on the set of Mean Girls.

Andy Uhler: I know, seriously.

Kimberly Adams: Stop trying to make nibbling happen, Kimberly. No, we're totally gonna make it happen.

Andy Uhler: You know, what's funny is I have 13 aunts and uncles on my mom's side. My mom was one of 14. So I am thinking about, I've been thinking about sort of what to call them. I'm happy with siblings. I think that's kind of cool.

Kimberly Adams: But then what do you call your brothers and sisters?

Andy Uhler: That's exactly right. Anyway. It's fine.

Kimberly Adams: My dad was one of 12. Look at us, big families.

Andy Uhler: So, so we also heard from Kevin in Wisconsin.

Kevin: I'm a couple of weeks behind on your podcast, but I heard the one just recently about the Cleveland Indians changing the name to the Guardians. Thought it was about time. I think it's a great deal. I have an idea. Possibly, you should maybe see if you can convince them to change the name of their stadium to the Galaxy. Think of the marketing capabilities of the Guardians in the Galaxy in the baseball world. That's all, thanks.

Kimberly Adams: Massive trademark violations.

Andy Uhler: Oh, absolutely. So, so you know what's really interesting about this name change, though, Kimberly, you'll like this. There is a roller derby team already in Cleveland called the Guardians. They own the website. So they're leveraging to the now Cleveland Indians who are going to be the Guardians, they're sort of leveraging saying, hey, if you want the website, you're gonna have to pony up some cash, so you might see some really, really nice roller skates on that roller derby team recently. I mean, it's super, super interesting. I love, I love the name change.

Kimberly Adams: I mean, maybe they'll get access to the stadium and do their roller derby in the stadium. And that would, that would be epic.

Andy Uhler: It's about time. I mean, I know you live in a spot that needs to, needs to figure it out. The football team is fine for me, but I know.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, but speaking of which, at least or sports and, you know, anyway, here's one more voice memo about women in sports.

Patty: Hi, this is Patty calling from South Lake, Texas. I'm getting my walk down before the Texas heat really kills us today. I'm responding to the story that Andy brought up about the women's NCAA basketball tournament. And I thought that it really dovetailed well into the story from the Olympics, in that the women's athletes made more metal count than the men, and had they been a country on their own, they would have come in fourth. So another aspect of why Title IX was so necessary and why women's sports need to have a lot more investment. Bye!

Kimberly Adams: Go ladies, go. I love that.

Andy Uhler: I will say, too, Patty lives about 15 minutes from where I grew up. I grew up in, I went to Keller Schools, which was right next to South Lake, we played South Lake in tennis, and it was pretty good. But she's exactly right.

Kimberly Adams: You played tennis?

Andy Uhler: I did, I played tennis. I taught tennis. I was a tennis instructor. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. It was a thing, my dad got us out there as little kids. I think I started playing when I was five or six. Yeah.

Kimberly Adams: And yet you are not the William sisters somehow.

Andy Uhler: Oh, god, no.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, and now we're gonna leave you with this week's answer to the Make Me Smart question, which is, what is something you thought you knew you later found out you were wrong about?

Nina: This is Nina from Denver. Something that I thought I knew but later found out I was wrong about is mask wearing after being vaccinated for COVID-19. I thought that being vaccinated was sufficient protection for my health. I trust in science after all, and I didn't need to wear a mask to protect people that were consciously foregoing the vaccine. But I am now one of the growing number of breakthrough cases, having tested positive despite being vaccinated. My 10-day isolation is privileged. But many of our neighbors who contracted COVID and need to isolate don't have the luxury of working remote, and maybe putting unvaccinated kiddos or loved ones with compromised immune systems at risk. So I'm doing a 180 on that. We still have a responsibility to each other to stop spreading this thing around and keep each other safe.

Andy Uhler: Amen.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, um, I'm glad that that's, I'm sorry that you're sick. But I'm glad that that's where, you know, you're landing on this. And I think it's really easy, you know, because somebody very close to me got sick with COVID despite being vaccinated, and quite seriously, so, and it's very easy to be bitter. Be like, you know, why should I have to jump through hoops for people who are willfully choosing not to protect others? And, you know, looking out for yourself and for other vaccinated people could be one reason, but also, you know, I wouldn't wish the worst of it on anybody, regardless of what decisions that you make.

Andy Uhler: Hmm, no, I think you're right. It's, it's, it's just that it's, it's, it's that sort of sense. And she said it too, that sense of sort of responsibility to everybody else. It's sort of thinking about people beyond, beyond you. I mean, you know, getting sick is one thing, but also stopping the spread. I mean, that's, that's what we talk about all the time and what we need to be thinking about, I think a lot.

Kimberly Adams: And speaking of people putting things off, if you have put off emailing or sending us a voice memo with your answer to the make me smart question, consider calling us. Leave us a message, call me, beep me if you want to reach me, at our new number 508-82-smart, we really appreciate it. Make Me Smart is produced and directed by Marissa Cabrera. Tony Wagner is our digital producer and our intern is Grace Rubin.

Andy Uhler: Today's program was engineered by my buddy Brian Allison, with mixing by Lianna Squillace. Ben Tolliday and Daniel Ramirez composed our theme music. The senior producer is Bridget Bodnar and the executive director of on demand is Sitara Nieves. This was fun.

Kimberly Adams: Yes. We had a fire alarm in my building today and I, you know, very carefully grabbed my cat, went out, got about halfway down the stairs after helping a neighbor get her cat, and we got halfway down the stairs and realized that both of us had forgotten our masks. And I was like, man.

Andy Uhler: Oh, right. Yep. Just stand really far away.

Kimberly Adams: Yep.

Andy Uhler: Yep.