

Frequently Asked Questions for Clinical Trainees RE: COVID-19

Updated: 3-15-2020 6 pm

Communications

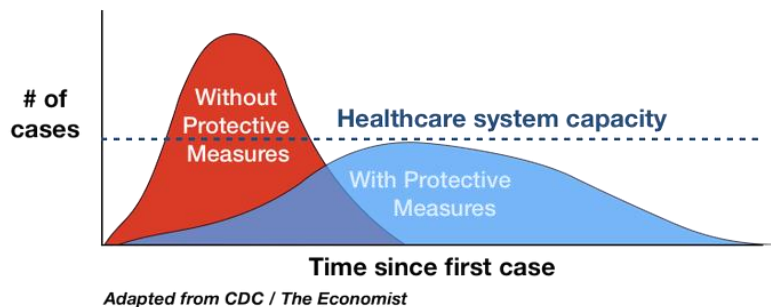
This is a rapidly evolving situation, and we expect that our plans will continue to change. We will do our best to provide timely updates as the situation evolves.

Decision to Suspend M3 and M4 Clinical Rotations

After careful thought and consideration, the College of Medicine leadership has made the difficult decision to **temporarily suspend all clinical rotations effective immediately**. We will **reassess this decision by March 29, 2020**. We understand that some of you will be relieved by this decision, and others will be frustrated by disruptions in your education and potential missed opportunities. However, we believe that the rapidly changing environment has created a situation where we can no longer be assured that you will have access to the necessary resources or mentorship at all clinical sites to allow rotations to continue in a comparable fashion as required by our accreditor. This is the guiding principle we have used to consider all of your educational experiences.

Flattening the Curve

Please remember that it is our duty as health care professions to strive to preserve and enhance the health of individuals and populations as well as to educate others on how to achieve this goal. We are now in a stage of the epidemic that requires efforts to mitigate spread of the disease to lessen overload of the limited capacity of healthcare delivery systems. It is critical for all of us to employ the various recommended protective measures to slow the spread of the virus and spread out in time the number of severe cases requiring high level hospital care. These measures will save lives.



Dr. Gonsenhauser on Spectrum News:

<https://app.criticalmention.com/app/#clip/view/85ee1854-8168-4891-943c-ebb655dc86cc?token=a3817e9b-a834-4bbe-8fc3-475ea8c4f62f>

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Impact of Curricular Restrictions on Student Education

M4: Fourth year students who are completing rotations that are necessary for graduation will be contacted with alternate educational experiences for meeting the clinical requirements.

**Expect a communication from Dr. David Sperling by 3 pm on 3-16-20.*

M3: Third year students will be updated with plans for completing an alternative online curriculum for the next 2 weeks. Special testing arrangements have been made for summative exams.

**Expect a communication from Dr. Susan Nofziger by 3 pm on 3-16-20.*

M1 & M2: First- and second-year students will continue online educational activities. All face to face instruction is suspended. Special testing arrangements have been made for summative exams.

**Contact Dr. Ryan Palmer for any questions.*

Final plans for temporary curricular modifications will be reviewed and approved by College of Medicine Curriculum Committee.

We will update you as decisions are made and appreciate your understanding and flexibility in these rapidly changing times.

Isolation and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19

In large part, the decision to limit students in clinical environments is related to a national shortage of PPE. The following is useful information regarding use of PPE.

A tiered approach to isolation recommendations has been published by hospital epidemiology: <https://onesource.osumc.edu/sites/Audience/Nursing/Documents/COVID-19/Airborne%20Infection%20Isolation%20Rooms%20Guidance.pdf>

The level of isolation required will depend on the availability of personal protective equipment in the medical center, the severity of illness of the patient, and the anticipated need for aerosol generating procedures.

General recommendations include the use of an N-95 respirator or PAPR and negative airflow room, mask with face shield or goggles, and gown and gloves (contact). PAPRs are currently in very short supply and availability is limited to high risk areas [such as the ICU where aerosol generating procedures are expected to occur].

Students should not participate in the direct care of a suspected or confirmed patient with COVID-19. In other situations where airborne isolation is needed (ex. tuberculosis), students who normally wear PAPRs should not attempt to wear an N-95 mask without proper FIT testing.

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More information about PPE is available on the OneSource page including reuse of procedure masks and N95 respirators:

<https://onesource.osumc.edu/departments/Epidemiology/Pages/PPE%20Instructions.aspx>

See above for updated recommendations coming soon. See COVID-19 page in OneSource website (<https://onesource.osumc.edu/sites/Coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>).

Concerns About Illness or Potential Exposure

There are no vaccines to prevent COVID-19. The best preventive steps for any communicable disease include simple but important measures to practice as part of your daily routine, especially during flu season:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds or more with soapy water. If unavailable, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick (except to visit a health care professional) and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals to ensure a healthy immune system.

Also, clean high-touch areas – counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, nightstands – every day using household cleaning spray or wipes according to label directions.

NEOMED follows the strict guidelines of CDC and works closely with the Governor's office and ODH. If you have recently been to areas affected by the outbreak, or have come into contact with an infected individual, and are experiencing signs and symptoms (fever, shortness of breath and cough) **please call your health care provider or emergency room before visiting to tell them about your recent travel and symptoms. You may also seek medical advice by calling your local health department.** If you are sick, stay home and call your physician for advisement. If you do not have a physician and feel that you need care, go to the nearest emergency room.

Members of the NEOMED community and all visitors to NEOMED must self-report to travelreporting@neomed.edu under the following circumstances:

- If you have returned from or traveled from any country outside the U.S. in the last 14 days.
- If you have cruised within the last 14 days.
- If you have had contact with anyone who has been confirmed by laboratory testing to have COVID-19 or anyone who is currently being tested.

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- If you are being actively monitored or observed by any local, county, state or federal public health agency due to risk of SARS-CoV2, which causes COVID-19.

Please visit neomed.edu/advisory/coronavirus/ for the latest updates.

Absence Due to Illness or Quarantine

It is the professional and ethical responsibility of all healthcare providers and trainees to stay home and not come to work if ill with fever and cough or shortness of breath - especially at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The course directors and administration will work with each individual student on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they are able to make up missed time and meet learning objectives and competencies in the most flexible manner possible. Students will not be penalized or 'punished' for missing classes due to illness or quarantine.

Personal Needs During the COVID-19 Crisis

Students who face financial, housing, food shortage or other personal needs should reach out to the NEOMED Student Services, Dr. Sandra Emerick (semerrick@neomed.edu).

NBME

Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) - The NBME reported on 3/13/20 that all CSEC Testing Centers will be closed from March 16-April 10. They are currently saying that these dates are subject to change. They will reach out to examinees whose dates have been cancelled to reschedule. They did also say that once testing centers resume operations, they will open additional testing appointments to meet increased, time sensitive testing demands. Updates may be found at the USMLE website:

<https://www.usmle.org/> under Announcements.

Step 1 and 2CK - Prometric has recently announced the closure of several test centers (including in KY and MI). We will be monitoring this situation as it evolves and make adjustments in College testing deadlines if required.

Volunteer activities

Students are not prohibited from volunteering at community free clinics at this time but should avoid seeing suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. Students may volunteer in medical center visitor screening and other COVID-19 crisis management activities not directly involving care of COVID-19 patients.