

To our colleagues:

We know that uppermost on the minds of most people in the community is the ongoing pandemic and how that will affect learning experiences going forward. UPSOM's leadership has been actively reviewing our data on infections/exposures, collaborating with the CMRO on procedures/recommendations, reviewing CDC guidelines, and considering testing capacity and other resources. We have consulted with many faculty, staff, and students on what should be done going forward. We are continuing to evaluate the risk/ benefit of each individual component of your curriculum, as we know that in-person education is superior but, even small risks need to be mitigated. As expected, conditions continue to evolve. One of the benchmarks that we have been watching is overall prevalence. As of last night, we hit 5% prevalence in our student body reporting a positive test in the last two weeks, a threshold the CDC recommends as a transition point to consider remote learning. The majority of individuals who tested positive last week only notified the school this week. (Of note, all of the positive student cases of COVID in the past two weeks were contracted outside of the hospital, in social situations or through household contacts.)

With that in mind, we would like to **continue our remote curriculum for MS1-2 at least until January 28, with some exceptions** for experiences that can be done safely and can't be rescheduled or done virtually. We feel we can deliver high quality virtual sessions that will achieve learning for most curricular events. We hope that by then, this surge will have abated, making it easier to continue in-person going forward.

**Students should remain in Pittsburgh and shelter-in-place** as per Pitt recommendations—it's safer to stay here as another round-trip travel just risks more spread for everyone. Sheltering in place means that you should avoid unnecessary events/gatherings that could lead to infection (especially indoors).

Implications:

- All didactic lectures, small groups, labs, and workshops will be converted to Zoom (links through Navigator as usual)
- Exams will be done remotely during this period as open resource assessments (Hem 1/19, APE 1/24, THD 1/28), except for the NBME exam in THD on 1/28, which will be remote but closed resource.
- Scaife will remain open for study for students who wish, as long as students follow masking guidelines; eating/drinking is allowed with 6-foot spacing, 3 people in a room
- PECs will convert to remote format; some, that relied on in-person simulation or skills, will have to cancel (the required curriculum should take precedence over elective experiences)
- Research activities can continue in-person without interruption
- Shadowing (clinical experiences for professional development) can continue at clinical affiliate sites
- Volunteering and other community service can continue if students wish
- Any extracurricular activities (e.g., interest groups) and individual meetings should preferentially be done remotely during this time.
- Some skills sessions in the required curriculum will continue, because the sessions are essential for skill development of all students, and can be delivered safely. In the IPC block, this means:

<b>APE-Adult</b>	Ophtho skills sessions next week will be remote. Dental/ENT skills sessions for MS1s 1/18-20 will be postponed; students will do this next year. IPC2 sessions for MS1s will begin as planned 1/24, with students in the SP suite wearing face masks (no HEENT exams). GU/Gyn skills sessions will begin as planned 1/31 with SPs in the evening.
<b>APE-Peds</b>	Orientation will shift to remote, but in-person sessions at CHP and Magee will go on as planned.
<b>CE</b>	Orientation 1/18 will be remote but in-person sessions after 1/24 will go on as planned.

Course directors will provide more detail on this and further changes may take place depending on safety, faculty/staff availability, and other factors.

Courses that feel that a specific session needs to be delivered in-person must get permission from Dr. Rosenstock first and will only be approved if there is a compelling educational need. Events or groups interested in holding in-person events during that time similarly should request permission from Dr. Gonzaga.

Nothing has changed for MS3-4s, who will continue to do their rotations in-person. OSCEs and SHELF exams will also remain in-person, unless conditions change. Remember—please don't eat/drink unmasked in clinical settings unless you are alone or six feet away from others.

Remember to get your booster shots if you haven't already and report it to Kate Eastwood in OSA (it's now a Pitt requirement). Wear good-fitting surgical masks (not cloth); KN95s and double-masks are no better. Stay home if you are sick—please!

This all may change depending on conditions—stay tuned for more updates and let us know if you have questions.

We hope this allows us to maintain academic progression and safety for all.

Your deans