

Dear students,

We continue to follow recommendations from local authorities and the CDC regarding covid. As we indicated in our message yesterday, we will resume classes January 4, and expect **all MS 1-2** students to be tested following travel. Evolving guidelines indicate that testing is most meaningful about 3 days after travel is complete. Assuming that many of you will just be returning tomorrow or Monday, or may be subject to cancelled flights, we have decided to return to remote teaching for the first week to allow everyone to be tested at an appropriate time after travel. PCR testing is most reliable, but if you have a positive quick test, you should follow isolation guidelines and let us know. Unfortunately, negative home tests are not sufficiently reliable for decisions about isolation.

We understand that many are anxious about traveling, but the risks are similar to when you left Pittsburgh at the beginning of the holiday break. Moreover, it is unlikely to improve anytime in the near future. Schools across the country are making a variety of decisions from restarting classes in person this week to delaying for several weeks. Our careful read of the available data, as well as consultation with the CMRO, has convinced us that beginning essentially as planned is safe and ultimately to your advantage.

We remind you to wear close fitting masks (without gaps around your face), KN95 if you are particularly worried.

Testing appointments are available at [Curative.com](https://book.curative.com) by the Allegheny Health Department. https://book.curative.com/search?gclid=Cj0KCQiAlMCOBhCZARIsANLid6Z9urh_58Xtz4WDIbkX_kolrOfRj8-mHygPSIMx6P06mEMjw8lfAZ0aAkrKEALw_wcB#8.75/40.5028/-79.8804 There is a site in the Carnegie Museum parking lot and several others elsewhere, possibly closer to where you live. Appointments can be made on line.

MS3-4s will start clinical rotations in January as planned without testing requirements, as we continue to follow the UPMC Guidelines for Clinical Students. We had already arranged for clerkship orientations to be remote, and clinical education requires in-person contact. Fortunately, the lower density of contact and COVID mitigation at clinical sites allows for us to continue this in-person education safely.

We look forward to having you back.

Best,
AET

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