

**TO:** Mount Sinai Health System Employees, Faculty and Students

**FROM:** Mount Sinai Health System Leadership

**DATE:** \*UPDATED\* March 11, 2020

**RE:** COVID-19 Mount Sinai Health System Policy

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As part of our ongoing efforts to contain and effectively treat patients diagnosed with COVID-19, we are instituting a number of system-wide policies that will impact our staff, patients, visitors and students. These changes are being implemented, on an ongoing basis, in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, as well as the NY State and local Departments of Health, to ensure quick and appropriate response to this situation.

We ask that you carefully review these changes, and do not hesitate to ask senior staff and managers for clarification, if needed. As always, if any questions, please submit questions to [CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org](mailto:CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org)

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## I. **COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES**

- Before visitor entry or any gathering, the organizer will ensure that a representative is stationed at the entry, with adequate hand sanitizer supplies and directions/signage, to ensure that each individual meets the following criteria:
  - **Symptom check:** If anyone has had any of the following symptoms within the preceding 24 hours, they must be refused entry to the meeting:
    1. feeling feverish
    2. new-onset persistent cough
    3. nasal congestion
  - **Do not shake hands**
  - **Hand Hygiene:** Even if previously done on entering the building or in prior meeting, Hand hygiene with hand sanitizer prior to entry into the room (if no sanitizer is available, the meeting should not occur.)
- We are not recommending temperature checks or screenings.
- If any questions (for example, if you are unsure where to secure hand sanitizer for your meeting), please submit questions to [CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org](mailto:CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org)

## II. VISITOR POLICY

- Only healthy visitors may visit a hospital patient. All visitors must follow the strict COVID-19 Safety Guidelines. If a visitor shows any symptoms, staff should politely ask them to leave and provide them with follow-up information. Talking points will be provided separately to assist staff.
- Specific Limitations on Visitors
  - All visitors are limited to **15 years or older**.
  - *In-patients*: Inpatients will only be allowed **two** healthy visitors at a time.
    - *Exceptions*:
      - PACU: Only allowed **one** healthy visitor.
      - ICU/NICU: May limit to **one** healthy visitor, at their discretion.
  - *Emergency Department*: All patients in the emergency departments will be limited to only **one** healthy visitor at a time.
  - *Maternity Ward*: Limited to **two** healthy visitors at a time, who must be partners or grandparents.
  - *Ambulatory Sites (i.e., Urgent Care, Medical and Surgical Practices, Radiology, Oncology, Ambulatory Surgeries and Procedure Suites)*: Only **one** companion per patient allowed into the practice (with the exception for pediatric patients who may have **two**).
    - When sites begin testing for COVID-19, companions will be restricted from accompanying the patient into the room unless medically appropriate.
- Specific Limitation for Visiting COVID-19 Positive, PUI and PUM patients
  - COVID-19 Positive, PUI and PUM patients will **not** be allowed any visitors
    - There may be some exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis (ie. pediatric patients)
    - Patients should be encouraged to use FaceTime and other virtual methods to speak with loved ones.
- Implementation of Visitor Policy

- Staff, Nurse Managers and the Nursing Administrator can be called as needed to reinforce this policy and explain the situation to the visitor. As a last resort, Security may be called to remove a symptomatic or sick visitor who refuses to leave. We will provide talking points to assist in this process.
- In unique circumstances, manager discretion can be used.
- If a visitor is symptomatic and is asked to leave, the visitor should also be directed to our website for additional guidance on how to seek evaluation and care.

### **III. STUDENT POLICY**

- For ALL Students: No students will be allowed to provide front-line care to known or suspected cases of COVID-19.
- For visiting Medical Students: We are temporarily not accepting any new incoming visiting students, both domestic and international.
- For visiting Non-Medical Students: Physician assistant, nursing, or other non-medical students performing rotations at our facilities will NOT be allowed to provide front-line care to patients with known or suspected cases of COVID-19.

#### **IV. LECTURES, EVENTS AND MEETINGS POLICY**

- Out of an abundance of caution, effective March 10, we are instituting a temporary policy to cancel all in-person large group lectures, events and meetings across the health care system and, if possible, offer a virtual alternative. This includes, but is not limited to, grand rounds, educational classes, administrative meetings, and clinical meetings. To be clear, the Mount Sinai Health System, including the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, remains open under this policy. We are just limiting the size of gatherings and also limiting visitors.
- **We are asking everyone to limit meeting sizes of any remaining meetings to a small group (ideally below 20).**
- **All in-person meetings should only be held if they are essential and need face to face communication - and all organizers should aim to convert meetings to a virtual means of communication.**
  - **We recommend proactively cancelling – or converting to virtual - all non-essentials meetings through March 31st.**
- Any group meetings that do occur in person must follow the strict [COVID-19 Safety Guidelines](#).
- If someone believes a lecture, event or meeting should be an exception to this policy (e.g., a blood drive), please submit a request to Vicki LoPachin at [vicki.lopachin@mountsinai.org](mailto:vicki.lopachin@mountsinai.org).

## V. **TRAVEL POLICY**

- With COVID-19 continuing to spread around the world and throughout our nation, it is important that we keep our faculty, trainees, employees, and families safe. In order to achieve this and ensure we have adequate workforce staffing, we are implementing new travel policies. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding. As such, please note the following restrictions on travel for Mount Sinai staff, faculty and trainees:
  
- Travel Restrictions:
  - **All WORK-RELATED international and domestic travel is prohibited. In limited and specific circumstances, managers/supervisors may allow exceptions to this policy.**
  
  - **All PERSONAL international and domestic travel - outside New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut - requires approval (or re-approval if already booked) by the manager/supervisor.**
  
- Timing:
  - This policy is effective as of Monday, March 16 through April 30. We will re-assess in mid-April and extend, if necessary.
  
- Important Information on Assistance with Policy Related Cancellations
  - If you made *work-related travel* arrangements through Amex Global, you can get help canceling or rescheduling at 669-272-1447. If any additional costs outside Amex Global, that aren't waived or reimbursed, you should submit through the normal travel voucher process for reimbursement with documentation.
  
  - We understand that there may be a cost to *cancelling personal travel* under this policy. If any costs aren't waived or reimbursed, you should submit for reimbursement consideration with documentation to [ryan.keneally@mountsinai.org](mailto:ryan.keneally@mountsinai.org)
  
- Specific Guidance Regarding Personal Travel to Level 2 or 3 Countries
  - If you travel for personal reasons to level 2 and 3 countries, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (click here for [CDC list](#))—or are currently on a trip to these countries—you must self-quarantine at home for 14 days upon your return. There is no exception to this policy.
    - If you are a student and live in shared Mount Sinai housing, you may be required to cover the cost of self-quarantine. If you are an employee, you may be required to take paid time off (PTO) for the self-quarantine time.

- Anyone who has traveled to or had a connecting flight or otherwise transited through any Level 2 or 3 countries within the past 14 days or who does so while this policy is in effect must contact the Employee or Student Health Services as follows:
  - Employee Health Services: 212-824-7690
  - Student Health Services: 212-241-6023



## **VI. VOLUNTEER POLICY**

- Appropriately credentialed volunteers will continue to be permitted to perform their volunteer services.
- All volunteers should be directed to follow the same policies as employees – including COVID-19 Safety Guidelines.
- Volunteers are regarded as non-essential personnel, and as a result, should not be involved in the care of any patient who is suspected of or known to be infected with COVID-19.

## **VII. VENDORS, CONSULTANTS AND PRESS POLICY**

- Representatives from vendors, outside consultants and the press are not permitted on site at Mount Sinai with the following exceptions:
  - Representatives who perform essential services that must be performed on a Mount Sinai Health Care System site, will be permitted on site, but solely for the purpose of providing those essential on-site services (e.g., equipment maintenance and support).
  - Any representatives who is determined to be essential by Carlos Maceda, Susan Mashni, Mike McCarry or Lucia Lee in advance of their arrival on site will be permitted on site.
  - Professionals who perform essential functions (e.g., outside counsel, accountants and auditors, etc.) may be permitted on site if essential to the operation of the institution with the permission of a senior vice president.
- Any individual who is permitted on the premises is subject to the same restrictions and requirements as employees, including COVID-19 Safety Guidelines.

## **VIII. CAFETERIA AND FOOD SERVICES ACCESS POLICY**

- Main cafeterias will be restricted to those with a Mount Sinai ID only. **Cafes and smaller on-site food options will remain open to all, staff permitting.** We are implementing this to protect our patients and visitors from large gatherings and to protect our staff. At a point of entry, as worked out by each site, patrons will be asked to show ID and to use hand sanitizer before entry. We will assist campuses, as needed, in implementation and will provide posters and flyers to explain the policy to visitors.