

3/16/2020 – Update on Clerkships

Dear MS3 students,

I know this continues to be a difficult time for you all. Nevertheless, a number of you have contacted me to say that you see the COVID19 pandemic and the developing crisis as a great learning opportunity and that many in your class want to remain involved in clerkships. We are working hard to prioritize your education, however, we also want to make sure you all are safe.

MS3 students will still be allowed to continue in clerkships at this time. We know that several schools in NY state (NYC as well as upstate NY) have postponed clerkships into the future. Since many of you are asking to continue in clerkships, we don't want to prevent you from doing so. However, at some point, we may no longer have a choice (based on the severity of the situation or decisions by the government or AAMC) and might have to postpone clinical work into the 4th year. For now, we want to make the best of the time we have.

We have also heard concerns from students that they don't feel comfortable being on clerkships now, for various reasons (personal, at-risk family member they care for, etc.). If any of you feel that you should not be involved in clinical rotations right now, we will allow you to opt out of clinical rotations. You can still attend any remote sessions, watch recorded lectures, study for the shelf exam, etc. There will be make up clinical time in the future (unclear when given the uncertainty of the COVID19 situation). Please communicate with your clerkship director/coordinator if you choose to do this.

Unfortunately, as of today, the standardized patient program has been suspended until at least 4/17/2020. This means there will be no SPEs that involve standardized patients on the clerkships. Clerkships are going to come up with alternative experiences for the formative SPE as best as they can. The summative SPE will most likely have to be postponed until a time when the standardized patients are available again.

With the first confirmed cases of COVID19 in Onondaga County, the out-of-hospital testing centers not quite established, and hospital staff still getting acquainted with how to use / who gets PPE for which situation, we feel that it will be best if for the next week you all were kept out of the highest risk environments for COVID19 exposure. Students will not be allowed in the Emergency Department or in Intensive Care Units from now until 3/23/2020. We will make further plans over the next several days. For those of you in the EM clerkship right now, you will still go to EMSTAT tomorrow for simulation cases, and the EM clerkship leadership is working on alternative experiences for you over the next few days.

Again, we know that this is a very stressful and uncertain time. We are all concerned for what the future holds, for ourselves, our patients, and our loved ones. I still think that you all have chosen the best profession in the world. Reach out if you have information or questions for us. Please take care of yourself, take precautions to stay safe and stay healthy. Dr. Lesperance and I are in frequent contact with Dr. Chin and Upstate leadership and will keep you updated in the days to come.

Thank you all for being part of the Upstate team,

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