



STRATEGY 1 – Coordination with Public Health Officials

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine (GCSOM) is part of Geisinger, an integrated health service organization. As one of the nation's largest health service organizations we have the advantage of having access to and guidance from professionals in public health, infectious disease, epidemiology, and emergency preparedness among others to assist in developing our plan as we proceed to resume in-person instruction, operations, services and activities.

GCSOM has established a governance structure to oversee the plan for phased-in reopening of the Medical Sciences Building (MSB). This structure consists of a steering committee that is led by the president and dean and includes representatives from medical education, graduate education, student affairs, human resources, information technology, facilities and public safety, finance, student health services, clinical affairs (Geisinger system), faculty affairs, academic affairs and marketing & communications.

In addition, a project team consisting of department leadership, students staff and faculty to include epidemiology have developed a detailed project plan outlining actions necessary to reopen the building safely and resume in-person instruction, operations, services and activities. These actions have been created in alignment with the guidance provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

A Pandemic Response Team (PRT) has been identified to review any circumstances that pose a threat to the MSB, in-person instruction, operations, services or activities. This team is led by the Pandemic Safety Officer (PSO) and comprises representatives from facilities, infection control, epidemiology, student health services, employee health, marketing and public relations.

Threats may consist of report(s) made by students, faculty or staff to the PSO on perceived or actual at-risk activities or behaviors on campus, a change in the status of the county as determined by Governor Wolf, or two or more positive COVID-19 tests among students, faculty or staff within an incubation period (14 days).

The PRT will meet, review information that is available, and make a recommendation to the COVID-19 Steering Committee, with final decision to be made by the President and Dean.

This plan will be updated and communicated as new information becomes available.



STRATEGY 2 – Safely Resuming In-person Instruction

FACULTY AND STAFF

GCSOM has implemented a phased approach to reopening the MSB to faculty and staff. Per Geisinger guidelines, all employees who can continue to work from home through December 31 will do so. Faculty and staff who must be in the MSB to provide student services and instruction will return as needed, beginning July 13.

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Undergraduate Medical Education (MD) Program plan allows us to have a hybrid delivery of curriculum for our students, so that they can benefit from in-person, hands-on training and learning activities, but also limits large group activities that can be delivered virtually. First- and second-year medical students will begin to enter the building on August 3.

Our plan includes starting the academic year with offering in-person sessions for clinical skills, exam reviews, laboratory experiences and some flipped classroom learning sessions, that can be easily managed keeping all students and faculty within CDC, state and local guidelines. The schedule for the live sessions will have first-year medical students in the building on opposite days and times to those of the second-year medical students, reducing the total number of people that will be in the building at any given time for educational activities.

The curriculum is also adaptable. As needed, we will reduce the in-person sessions and only offer those experiences that are ideally delivered in person, such as clinical skills and laboratory activities. We are also prepared to deliver all the curriculum virtually if the need arises.

Our academic calendar has been modified so that in-person instruction will end prior to Thanksgiving. After the Thanksgiving break students will complete all assignments and classwork virtually until after Jan 1. All classes will be held synchronously during that time with additional asynchronous activities as directed by course faculty.

Third-year medical students will have a 10-week virtual curriculum. When completing rotations at clinical sites they will not have in-person instruction at the MSB and will follow all the safety guidelines of the host health system.

Fourth-year medical students will begin with virtual electives. When in clinical spaces, students will follow all the safety guidelines of the host health system.

ADAPTING TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

The Department of Medical Education has created three curriculum plans (A, B, C) to facilitate quickly modifying in-person instruction as COVID-19 cases within the school and/or the community require stay-at-home or quarantine orders. Plan A has the most in-person instruction (approximately 60% in-person time), with less in



Plan B (approximately 30% in-person time) and 100% virtual instruction in Plan C. The academic year will begin with Plan A in August. The triggers to move from A to B or from B to C include a change by the Department of Health as to the status of Lackawanna County or more than one positive case within the MSB. If we were to move to Plan B at any time during the Fall semester, we would remain there through December and reevaluate for the January 2021 return. The same holds true for moving to Plan C. We will not move from a more restrictive plan back to one with more in-person instruction within a semester. The PRT will meet, review available information, and make recommendations to the COVID-19 Steering Committee as circumstances change.

CLINICAL SKILLS

Physical exam instruction needs to have a hands-on component. These sessions will be taught with a modified approach mitigating exposure to students, faculty and standardized patients. Faculty have developed appropriate plans to manage traffic control, person protective equipment, disinfecting workspaces and physical distancing. As needed, modified exam rooms will be set up.

GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The GCSOM School of Graduate Education's Master of Biomedical Sciences degree program will deliver all instruction virtually through December.

ALL INDIVIDUALS

The following applies to all individuals entering the MSB: faculty, staff, students, contracted workers, vendors, visitors, etc.

All individuals will be screened prior to entering the building, as outlined in Strategy 3. Any individual with a fever greater than or equal to 100.4 or other symptoms will not be allowed to enter the building.

While on campus, all will adhere to social distancing guidelines. The maximum occupancy for social distancing for each room in the MSB is stated on signage outside the room and seating is set up appropriately. Where seating arrangements cannot accommodate social distancing, clear barriers are in place. Students are required to reserve specific study spaces if they wish to study in the MSB. New spaces have been set up to accommodate the need since social distancing reduces the number of seats available in existing locations.

Signage throughout the building reinforces practices related to hygiene, sanitation and face coverings. Hand sanitizer is available throughout the building.

Policies for attendance and accommodations for COVID-related issues for faculty and staff are governed by Geisinger employee policies.

Policies for attendance requirements, absenteeism and COVID-related issues for students have been reviewed and adjusted as appropriate.



Non-essential travel is suspended for all faculty, staff and students through December 31, per Geisinger policy.

STRATEGY 3 – Monitoring Health Conditions of our Campus Community

SCREENING FOR EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS BEFORE LEAVING HOME

All Geisinger employees and students entering the building will complete the Daily Employee Health Department Screening Survey before entering the building. Exempt employees and students should complete the survey before leaving their residence to avoid a trip to the MSB if a red X is received. Non-exempt employees should complete the survey immediately before entering the building.

(<https://redcap.geisinger.org/surveys/?s=DDFE4KPFLM>)

Geisinger employees must enter their Lawson ID #.

Everyone is required to take their own temperature to confirm they do not have a fever greater than or equal to 100.4.

NOTE: All GCSOM exempt employees must complete the screening questions daily beginning on June 30 and will be required to continue this indefinitely. This applies to exempt employees who are working from home, along with those who are returning to the MSB. All students will also be required to complete the screening questions daily and should refer to messaging from Student Health for the start date of their daily screening which differs for each class year. Non-exempt employees are only required to complete the screening questions on days they are working, whether from home or in the MSB.

After submitting the survey responses, the individual will see a green check mark meaning that they may proceed to the building. A red X means they must not go to the building and should self-quarantine. Employees are directed to call Employee Health immediately at 570-214-9424 and press 1 for COVID-19-related assistance. Students are directed to call Student Health immediately at 570-558-4291. Additional instructions pertaining to quarantine, testing, isolation and/or seeking medical care will be provided.

DAILY EMPLOYEE HEALTH DEPARTMENT SCREENING

- Please select the status that best matches your current affiliation with Geisinger? (Select one)
 - Employee
 - Contracted Employee
 - Student
- What is your Geisinger email address OR employee login?
- Employees must enter their Lawson ID #.
- What is your date of birth?
- Do you have any of the following new symptoms? (Check all that apply)
 - Fever greater than or equal to 100.4
 - A new cough
 - Shortness of breath
- Do you have any of the following new additional symptoms? (Check all that apply)
 - Chills or repeated shaking
 - Acute muscle pain
 - Acute headache
 - Sore Throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Nausea and Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- In the last 14 days, have you been exposed to someone who tested positive (+) for COVID-19 without proper PPE?
- In the last 14 days have you traveled out of PA to one of the states listed on the PA DOH website [Pa.gov Information for Travelers](#)? In accordance with the guidelines for essential workers we are NOT requiring you to quarantine at this time. You should continue to mask, check your symptoms daily, and reach out to Employee Health if you develop symptoms.
- Have you been requested by Employee Health to report your daily symptoms or are you being monitored by Employee Health for a COVID related condition?



SCREENING UPON ENTERING THE MSB

All individuals will be screened upon entering the MSB by personnel at the entrance to the building.

Employees and students will be required to show the green check mark in the Screening Survey app. All others will be asked the survey questions by GCSOM personnel. Temperatures will be taken for all individuals entering the building.

Anyone who does not pass the screening survey or who has a temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 will not be allowed to enter the building and will be given instructions for calling employee health, student health or contacting their own health service provider.

MONITORING

GCSOM will continue to monitor changing transmission levels and community spread of the virus and will modify course modalities, schedules and academic calendars as needed.

CONTACT HOTSPOT TRACING (MSB AND THE COMMUNITY)

Any GCSOM employee or student who exhibits symptoms for COVID-19 becomes a Person Under Investigation (PUI) for contact tracing. The initial interview with the PUI will be conducted by GCSOM contact tracers, Paul Burke, Andrea Mulrine or Terri Lacey. The individual will be asked to identify those they have had close contact with from two days prior to the start of symptoms. The contact tracers will provide instructions for isolation and quarantine and information on available resources.

Contact tracing with the PUI's close contacts will be handled through GCSOM. A GCSOM employee's close contacts will be interviewed by Andrea Mulrine and a student's close contacts will be interviewed by Paul Burke.

If a PUI tests positive for COVID-19, Geisinger's contact tracers will also reach out to the person for additional contact tracing. Contact tracing for all COVID-19 positive individuals who are not GCSOM faculty, staff or students will follow protocols per the site that completed their testing.

SURVEILLANCE

Public health surveillance is the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of health-related data essential to planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/faq-surveillance.html>).

The pandemic has also revealed that we need to strengthen surveillance. To increase the likelihood that we'll see a new wave as it develops, we need novel early-warning surveillance systems to supplement the existing approaches that failed to capture the original emergence of COVID-19 cases. To this end, Geisinger has partnered with Stanson Health in the development and deployment of an AI-enabled solution that sifts through volumes of ambulatory, ER, and other provider documentation in real time for unstructured phrases that suggest COVID-19 symptoms such as, "loss of taste," "trouble breathing," and hundreds of other phrases that in the course of a return to busy clinical practice might initially go unnoticed. (<https://hbr.org/2020/06/how-one-health-system-is-transforming-in-response-to-covid-19>)



COUNTERING STIGMA

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/reducing-stigma.html>

Self-reporting of symptoms and exposure by students, faculty, and staff is imperative to contain an outbreak of COVID-19 on campus and stigma can discourage self-reporting and self-quarantining.

Per CDC guidelines, GCSOM will:

- Establish efforts to counter the stigma of getting the virus and self-quarantining. This could include posters, reminders by faculty in classes, and electronic communication.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of those seeking healthcare and those who may be part of any contact investigation.
- Quickly communicate the risk or lack of risk from associations with products, people, and places.
- Raise awareness about COVID-19 without increasing fear.
- Share accurate information about how the virus spreads.
- Speak out against negative behaviors, including negative statements on social media about groups of people, or exclusion of people who pose no risk from regular activities.
- Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes.
- Engage with stigmatized groups in person and through media channels including news media and social media.
- Thank healthcare workers and responders. They perform a valuable service to everyone by helping make sure this disease does not spread further.
- Share the need for social support for people who have returned from hotspot regions or are worried about friends or relatives in the affected region.

In addition, Geisinger employee policies and GCSOM student policies support self-quarantining as needed and mitigate any negative impact of quarantine on grades, tenure, promotion or employment status.

STRATEGY 4 – Mitigating and Containing the Spread of the Virus

Steve Jarbola is the assigned Pandemic Safety Officer (PSO) for the MSB and will lead actions in the MSB to mitigate and contain the spread of the virus. **All safety concerns or compromises in safety practices should be referred to the PSO for resolution.**

PROTOCOL FOR A CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE ON CAMPUS

1. The PSO will contact the Pennsylvania Department of Health.
2. The PSO will contact Geisinger's Director of Emergency Management.
3. GCSOM will work with the PADOH to determine if a short-term closure (2-5 days) to evaluate the impact of the positive COVID-19 case along with the transmission is needed. The building will be sanitized after 24 hours. The Pandemic Response Team (PRT) at GCSOM will make recommendations to the COVID-19 Steering Committee regarding building closure.



4. The closure of the MSB will be decided on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and cases in the community by the COVID-19 Steering Committee with final decision by the President and Dean upon recommendation from the PRT.
5. We will communicate case or exposure information with students, faculty and staff. During a closure of the MSB we will discourage students, faculty and staff from gathering or socializing anywhere, utilizing our existing communication methods to do this (Blackboard connect, email broadcast, etc.).
6. GCSOM will maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member according to the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, as applicable.
7. Any areas used by the COVID-19 case will be closed off until cleaned and disinfected. All common areas will also be cleaned and disinfected. Cleaning procedures will follow CDC guidance.
8. The PRT will make recommendations about suspending in-person classes to determine if staff or faculty should be allowed to use the building.
9. After consulting with the PADOH, the PRT will make recommendations to the COVID-19 Steering Committee regarding the length of a closure that is needed.
10. GCSOM will ensure continuity of education and research. Based on decisions of the COVID-19 Steering Committee and the President and Dean, virtual learning plans and adapted research activities will be implemented.
11. The Food Bank Committee will determine strategies to distribute food to students, and especially to any student that under quarantine.
12. Individuals exhibiting symptoms:
 - Will not be permitted to enter the MSB.
 - Must self-quarantine at home.
 - Must not report to work, class or clinical assignments.
 - May not participate in any institution-sponsored in-person events or activities.
 - Will be given information about consulting with their medical provider and options for testing and necessary treatment.
13. GCSOM will consult with the PADOH and follow contact tracing protocols to notify anyone exposed to a positive COVID-19 case to self-quarantine. Employees will contact Geisinger Employee Health and students will contact Student Health Services. If a student, faculty or staff member has been exposed, they will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days and instructed to follow additional state guidance.
14. GCSOM will assist with continuity of safe housing for affected students.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- GCSOM is ADA compliant and will follow Geisinger policies regarding telework to provide accommodations for individuals at higher risk of COVID-19 and individuals with disabilities.
- GCSOM will ensure any accommodations for people with disabilities are consistent with ADA laws and regulations. If an individual needs an accommodation GCSOM will make a full effort to accommodate.
- GCSOM follows Geisinger policies to provide opportunities to telework for employees over 60, employees with underlying health conditions, or for employees who are experiencing a mental health crisis as a result of COVID-19. All employees and students have access to mental health services.



TELEWORKING

- GCSOM will follow Geisinger policies to continue telework whenever possible, even when in-person instruction, operations, services and activities continue.
- GCSOM has calculated the appropriate number of individuals allowed in all MSB rooms for appropriate social distancing. Schedules for students and employees will be adjusted to limit the number of personnel utilizing the building spaces, maintaining appropriate measures.
- GCSOM will follow Geisinger policies for flexible attendance and personal leave.
- GCSOM will follow Geisinger policies for employee travel which is currently restricted. Only essential student travel is allowed.

STRATEGY 5 – Communicating Accurate and Timely Information

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf issued a stay-at-home order for the entire Commonwealth on March 16. At that time, school leadership was already issuing regular communications regarding pandemic preparations to all staff, students and faculty. Beginning on March 7 and continuing twice a week through April and then once a week to the present, a comprehensive newsletter has been published and distributed via email to the entire GCSOM community. Each newsletter details the school's mitigation and prevention efforts, changes to the workplace and learning environment, resources available and all other areas impacted by COVID-19 and the Commonwealth's stay-at-home order. In addition, these messages have been regularly reinforced by virtual community meetings hosted by school leadership and open to every member of the GCSOM community. Questions regarding COVID-19 and the GCSOM response are collected in advance of each meeting and inform the content of both the meeting and subsequent newsletters.

In addition, GCSOM's public-facing web pages are regularly updated in regard to the school's COVID-19 response and local media outlets are informed as necessary (<https://www.geisinger.edu/education/alert-page>). Moreover, all new and returning students receive detailed information about curriculum, learning environment, safety protocols and learning environment via the school's web-based learning management system, Canvas.

Going forward, the scheduling of regular communications will be adjusted as needed.

STRATEGY 6 – Public Health and Safety Measures

HYGIENE AND SANITATION PROTOCOLS

- Hygiene information is provided to all individuals and clearly posted throughout the MSB.
- Reminders are posted in restroom facilities to encourage handwashing.
- Appropriate hand sanitizer, hand wipes or hand soap are provided throughout the building.
- Regular cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched is conducted. This includes cleaning objects or surfaces not ordinarily cleaned regularly (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, etc.).



- Disinfectant supplies meet EPA criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).
- Facilities staff follows CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting facilities.

FACE COVERINGS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Face coverings will be worn by all individuals in all classrooms, public shared spaces on campus and in all circumstances when other people are present.
- Face coverings have been provided to all GCSOM faculty, staff and students. Additional face masks are available at the MSB front desk.
- Individuals unable to wear face coverings due to a health condition or disability will be encouraged to be extra cautious about maintaining greater social distance and observing all other hygiene protocols. In addition, they will be asked to wear a face shield if medically possible. Employees and students should refer to Geisinger's masking policy for details.
<https://geisinger.sharepoint.com/sites/Coronavirus/SitePages/Masking.aspx>
- Face covering and hygiene practices are communicated to all individuals on campus through signage and email messages.
- When warranted, personal protective materials, such as masks, face shields, or gloves required for a specific program or co-curricular activity will be provided.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- GCSOM has implemented social distancing interventions and made the necessary modifications to facilities to create an environment conducive to healthy, safe and inclusive learning.
- Students, faculty, and staff are instructed to maintain a safe social distance of at least 6 feet apart when feasible. This includes offices, classrooms, laboratories, hallways, restrooms, common areas and outdoor spaces.
- Plastic partitions or barriers are installed in places where social distancing cannot be observed (e.g., student service counters, cash registers, bathroom sinks, etc.).
- GCSOM will provide guidance such as tape on floors or sidewalks to enforce social distancing.
- Scheduled appointments with student service offices (e.g., financial aid, registrar, etc.) are required for non-emergency issues.
- Alternative methods of contact such as email, chat, and telephone calls are encouraged.
- Per Geisinger guidelines, non-instructional gatherings or events are limited to no more than 25 people through December. Exceptions may be made per approval from GCSOM leadership and with proper social distancing measures in place.
- Seating in common areas including the library and café has been reworked to follow social distancing guidelines.
- Student groups will be advised to host remote group events, gatherings or meetings to the extent possible.
- The number of people allowed in student lounges at one time is restricted to ensure safe social distancing.
- The building will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.



CLASSROOMS

- Class sizes are limited to accommodate appropriate social distancing of 6 feet between individuals.
- Face masks are always required.

MSB ENTRANCE

- All individuals will enter the MSB through the main lobby doors, either through the Pine Street or PNC Plaza entrances.
- All individuals will be screened as they enter the building, as described in Strategy 3.

SPACE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Occupancy in spaces within the MSB is limited to accommodate proper social distancing.
- The café seating has been reconfigured to accommodate proper social distancing. Where not possible, partitions are in place that provide added protection.
- As always, individuals may request their café order be served in take-out containers.
- GCSOM strategies and interventions implemented will not prohibit access for those with disabilities, including physical locations/spaces, instruction, student services, and activities if they are limited.
- All space accommodations follow ADA laws and regulations.
- A reservation system has been established for any student wishing to utilize the MSB for studying purposes. Access to a “study space” either within the library or in another room that has been repurposed for individual learning requires a reservation. This is to properly manage the number of students in the building and provide social distancing.