



## **POLICY TITLE**

COVID-19 Prevention and Health Clearance Protocol for UNC-CH MHSPAS Students

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a policy and procedure regarding protocols for pre-clinical phase and clinical phase students regarding methods of prevention and students who have symptoms of COVID-19, have a positive COVID-19 test or have been exposed to COVID-19. *Please note that as the COVID pandemic evolves, all guidance and protocols are subject to change. This protocol is effective as of October 25, 2021. Failure to follow this protocol is a deficiency in professional behavior and may be cause for disciplinary action.*

## **ARC-PA STANDARD ADDRESSED**

A3.01: Program policies must apply to all students, principal faculty and the program director regardless of location.

A3.02: The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply its policies and procedures to all students.

A3.08: The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply policies addressing student exposure to infections and environmental hazards before students undertake any education activities which would place them at risk. Those policies must: (a) address methods of prevention, (b) address procedures for care and treatment after exposure.

## **RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy is reviewed quarterly or as needed will the input from the UNC Chapel Hill Campus Health Clinical Exposure Committee and UNC Chapel Hill Health Professions Committee.

## **DEFINITIONS**

COVID-19: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

## **What are some methods of prevention regarding COVID-19?**

### **A. Mask and Eye Protection During Clinicals:**

Mask requirements are in place in all indoor areas at all clinical sites regardless of vaccination status. This means that all students must wear a mask when in any building affiliated with UNC Medical Center or Regional Campuses/sites. Students should also continue to keep at least six feet of physical distance whenever possible, especially at meal/break times. Additionally, any time a student enters a patient room or another patient care area where they cannot maintain six feet of distance, they must wear eye protection in addition to their mask. Please remember this is a requirement, not a suggestion.

- **Clinical experiences at UNC Medical Center:**
    - Visit UNC Medical Center's [Universal Pandemic Precaution](#) for more information.
  - **Clinical experiences at Regional Campuses/sites:**
    - If you are rotating out of UNC Health (for example at a regional campus) check in with the site education coordinator/UNC Chapel Hill MHSPAP Clinical Director to see if additional preparation is required.
- B. UNC-Chapel Hill Community Standards**  
<https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/community-standards/>
- C. Annual UNC Health LMS Training Modules:**  
All students enrolled in the UNC Chapel Hill MHSPAS Program are required to complete annual UNC Health LMS module on infection control for healthcare personnel which includes methods of prevention of COVID exposure.
- D. Review the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) COVID-19 Homepage:**  
UNC Chapel Hill MHSPAS students should review the [NCDHHS COVID-19](#) homepage for up-to-date information about COVID-19, guidance, resources, and ways to slow the spread.
- E. Frequently review the UNC-Chapel Hill CV-19 Dashboard:**  
The [UNC-Chapel Hill COVID-19 Dashboard](#) helps the university track and analyze the impact of COVID-19 on the overall health of the campus community and the ability to respond to change during these unprecedented times. The dashboard is updated daily Monday – Friday and pulls data from multiple sources to create a comprehensive illustration of health trends and operational capacities across campus, as well as stay updated on COVID-19 data relevant to campus, local and state communities.
- F. Frequently review the NCDHHS COVID-19 North Carolina Dashboard:**  
The [COVID-19 North Carolina Dashboard](#) provides an overview on the metrics and capacities that the state is following. Information included on the dashboard include daily cases, daily tests, hospitalizations, contact tracing, PPE, vaccinations outbreaks and clusters.
- G. SlowCOVIDNC Exposure App:**  
It is recommended UNC Chapel Hill MHSPAS students download the [SlowCOVIDNC Exposure Notification app](#), enable your Bluetooth and Exposure Notification settings, and be notified if you have been in close contact with someone who has shared a positive COVID-19 test result in the app. Once you opt-in to the notification system, you can also anonymously share a positive COVID-19 test result in the app. SlowCOVIDNC protects your identity and privacy while empowering you to protect yourself, your family, and your community.

## Health Clearance Protocol for Health Professions Students

*Please note that as the COVID pandemic evolves, all guidance and protocols are subject to change. This protocol is effective as of January 3, 2022. Failure to follow this protocol is a deficiency in professional behavior and may be cause for disciplinary action.*

### KEY POINTS/CHANGES:

- **You do not have to call Campus Health for a positive test. Make sure they have your results and you will receive instructions automatically. Positive results obtained outside of Campus Health or the CTPP clinic should be emailed to [campushealth\\_records@unc.edu](mailto:campushealth_records@unc.edu). ISOLATE as instructed.**
- **If symptomatic, you may seek a test on your own without calling Campus Health for evaluation first. Instructions for obtaining a diagnostic test are available on the [Campus Health website](#). If you need to speak to a provider, you may call 919-966-6573 (number specifically for Health Professions Students).**
- **You will not receive a clearance letter from Campus Health. Communicate with the designated person for your school or program about the instructions you received for return.**
- **If you are vaccinated AND boosted, quarantine is not required so long as you have no symptoms and do not test positive. If you are eligible for a booster but have not received one, you WILL need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19, even if you have received the initial vaccine dose(s).**
- **Guidance for return to CLINICAL settings MAY DIFFER from the University guidance to return to CAMPUS. Therefore, it is critical that you communicate with your clinical coordinator or other designated person(s) at UNC, your preceptor, and/or the facility's Occupational Health Service to confirm the appropriate time for return to your clinical rotation.**

**UNCHANGED: If you have symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, you must STAY HOME.**

### What to do if you have a POSITIVE COVID-19 test:

**If you have a positive test result at any time, regardless of vaccination status, whether or not you have symptoms, and regardless of where the test was performed, immediately self-isolate.** If you were tested on campus (CTTP or Campus Health), you will receive an email with instructions\* for isolation and return to activities. If you were tested elsewhere, send your results to [campushealth\\_records@unc.edu](mailto:campushealth_records@unc.edu) to receive these instructions. **You will NOT receive a clearance letter from Campus Health at the end of your isolation. You should communicate with the designated person for your program regarding your return.**

\*Please note that these instructions are written based on guidance for the general public. Healthcare facilities must simultaneously balance the need for adequate staff with the priority to protect vulnerable patients. **Because of this, your length of isolation may vary if you are in clinical rotation and may not be the same as the return to campus guidance.** Please communicate with your clinical coordinator, preceptor, and/or the Occupational Health Service at your assigned facility regarding return to clinicals.



## What to do if you have possible SYMPTOMS of COVID-19:

All students are required to self-monitor for symptoms on a daily basis:

- Do you have **new muscle aches** not related to another medical condition or another specific activity (e.g. due to physical exercise)?
- Do you feel like you may have a **temperature of greater than 100.0°F**?
- Do you have **sore throat, runny nose and/or congestion** not related to another medical condition (e.g. allergies)?
- Do you have a **new or worsening cough** that is not related to another medical condition?
- Do you have **shortness of breath** that is not attributable to another medical condition?
- Do you have **recent (<5 days) loss of smell and taste**?
- Do you have new onset of **vomiting or diarrhea** not related to another medical condition?

If you answer **yes to any of the questions** above, immediately **self-isolate**. Students who are symptomatic must be tested (PCR test) for COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status. Do not go to a Carolina Together testing site!

Follow [Campus Health instructions for testing](#). **You may not attend class or clinical rotations until your COVID test results come back.**

- If your PCR test result is **NEGATIVE**, you may return to classes or the healthcare setting (i.e., clinical rotations) once your symptoms resolve/improve. You must be **fever-free without antipyretics** (fever-reducing medicines such as Tylenol) **for at least 24 hours**, AND you must have had **no diarrhea or vomiting for at least 48 hours**, regardless of the cause. Return to class or clinicals may be allowed without full resolution of all symptoms (e.g., cough) so long as those symptoms are **improving**, and your test is negative. Call Campus Health or consult with your clinical coordinator/preceptor/facility Occ Health if unsure about whether return is permitted.
- If your test result is **POSITIVE**, you will be required to isolate. Follow the instructions above for positive tests.

## What to do if you are EXPOSED to COVID-19:

If you are exposed to **COVID-19**, whether at home, in the community, in class, in rotations, or at work, you must be extra-vigilant about self-monitoring and proper use of PPE for a period of time after exposure. Follow [CDC guidelines for quarantine & testing following exposure](#)\*\*.

If you have been fully **vaccinated and boosted (if eligible)**, you may continue normal activities as long as asymptomatic. If you have been granted a vaccine exemption, **or if you have been vaccinated but have not received a booster for which you are eligible**, you will need to quarantine (stay home) as recommended in the guidelines. [See [HOW TO Quarantine or Isolate \(CDC\)](#).]

If you notice **ANY symptoms** during this time, even if very mild, you must immediately **self-isolate** and follow the instructions above for symptoms.

**\*\*Your recommended length of quarantine may vary if you are in a clinical rotation.** Please communicate with your clinical coordinator, preceptor, and/or the Occupational Health Service at your assigned facility regarding return to clinicals. (See [guidelines for healthcare personnel](#).)

If any post-exposure test is **POSITIVE**, you will be required to isolate. Follow the instructions above for positive tests.

### **PUBLISHED**

- UNC PA Program Policies and Procedures web page: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/unc-pa/students/policies-procedures/>
- UNC PA Program Student Handbook

### **HISTORY OF APPROVAL AND UPDATES**

Initially approved by Program Director, May 2020

Updated, June 17, 2020; Updated, June 24, 2020; Updated January 6, 2021; Updated April 28, 2021; Updated August 5, 2021; Updated October 27, 2021; Updated January 2, 2022.