

Opportunities and Protocol for student to help in the COVID -19

BUSM medical students have stepped forward to assist our community response to the Covid-19 pandemic. To date, our students have spearheaded creative volunteer efforts outside the hospital setting. Students demonstrated their leadership and organizational skill, and have shared information about these well-coordinated initiatives with other local medical student groups.

There are new opportunities for students to be involved in clinically related activities, some potentially involving direct patient care at Boston Medical Center (BMC) or other locations. Caring for patients, especially under current conditions, can subject the caregiver to risk. That risk should always be mitigated by ensuring student involvement is restricted to patients and roles appropriate for the student's level of training (scope of practice), and with maximal safety measures put into place to protect the student. This includes appropriate supervision as well as documented training, not limited to correct and safe use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

In assessing possible opportunities for students to provide assistance, our primary responsibility should be to offer support to BMC and assistance partner organizations such as Boston Health Care for the Homeless (BHCH).

Guiding Principles:

- 1- Student participation must be voluntary. In the context of health care delivery and a high stakes educational environment, students are a vulnerable population. As such, it is critical there be no possibility (or appearance) of coercion in presenting students with a volunteer opportunity. Student participation in volunteer activities must adhere to and promote core BUSM values, including equity, fairness and must be guided by our high ethical standards- culturally- appropriate, high- quality care, and practicing within one's scope of practice.
- 2- Student involvement in patient care should only occur when there is a critical need for health care workers. Adequate training and appropriate experience for each volunteer position is essential. Only students with significant clinical experience should be considered for roles involving direct clinical care, or presence in the clinical care environment. Students must receive comprehensive training (specific to the proposed tasks) in advance of participating in patient care and both the students and faculty supervisor must attest to the completion of preparatory training.
- 3- Student involvement in patient care must only occur in an environment that has been made as safe as possible. This may involve prohibiting student involvement in the care of Covid-19 patients most likely to transmit virus (e.g. avoiding care where aerosol generating procedures are being used).
- 4- Students must be provided with state-of-the-art PPE (with appropriate training). There must be adequate supervision of students at all times, including the correct donning and doffing of PPE.

- 5- Adequate supervision also includes the monitoring the well-being, physical and psychological health of our students.
- 6- The consequences of participation must be made clear to students through the informed consent process, including what happens if the student becomes ill, requires a leave of absence or develops a disability. Students must be fully informed that participation could adversely affect the student's ability to engage in required medical school course or clinical work.
- 7- Student participation cannot interfere with student learning of required material in the medical school curriculum, and knowledge, skill, and attitudes gained during student participation cannot be used as a substitute for that required in the medical school curriculum.
- 8- If the volunteer experience is approved by our administration, BU would cover malpractice insurance for students (as is done for other approved experiences). Students are responsible to ensure that they have adequate health care to cover any health-related issues incurred during the experience.