

Re: Update from the Director

April 23, 2021

Dear Students,

Several weeks have passed since my last update related to your studies at the Ingram School of Nursing (ISoN) in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. An archive of my updates to you can be found on our website, organized by date, [here](#). I have been meeting with your student representatives on a weekly basis, and our next meeting is scheduled for the end of April, at which time I will be introduced to your new representatives and our meeting schedule and the possibility of future Student Town Halls will be reviewed.

I am reaching out today with information on three topics: (1) Student vaccination; (2) Travel; and (3) Fall on campus.

I. STUDENT VACCINATION

Given the fact that health professional students are being considered by the *Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux* (MSSS) as employees and the range of clinical areas to which ISoN students may be exposed, compliance with MSSS Directive, [Arrêté numéro 2021-024 du ministre de la Santé et des Services sociaux en date du 16 avril 2021](#) is best assured if ISoN students in all academic programs with clinical courses or interaction with patients or community members as part of their research activities are vaccinated against COVID-19. This applies to all students, whether previously infected or not. To that end, detailed instructions on vaccinations were emailed to all ISoN students by the Nursing Student Affairs Office (NSAO) on April 15th. This email included: (1) signing up for your appointment through: <https://portal3.clicsante.ca/>; (2) obtaining proof of ISoN enrolment from the Clinical Partnerships Office (CPO); and (3) uploading proof of vaccination to ISoN.

Those students with underlying health conditions or other reasons prohibiting them from taking the COVID-19 vaccine, should consult MSSS directives for health care staff in this regard. In general, students requesting exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine will be required **to submit a physician's statement and/or attestation letter to their Program Director**. If accepted, once in a clinical course or interacting with hospital- or community-dwelling research participants, frequent testing (e.g., 3x/week) will be required in lieu of vaccination (as per MSSS). The required COVID-19 test results related to these **exceptional cases** are to be communicated to your Course Coordinator or research supervisor and uploaded within 24 hours of reception or sooner onto the

Nursing Portal; the MSSS has mandated that educational institutions verify the vaccination status of its students.

For further information, the following documents may be useful:

- [Quebec rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program](#);
- [Algorithm for those previously infected](#) (Available in French only)

For any other questions or concerns about acquiring the COVID-19 vaccine, please reach out to the Nursing Student Affairs Office via email at student-affairs-officer.nursing@mcgill.ca.

As you may recall, I planned to provide you with the results of the vaccine survey students completed a few weeks ago. As of April 6th, 734 students had responded, with two-thirds already having received at least one dose. The remaining third shared why they were not vaccinated, with the majority not having received an appointment yet. This challenge should be resolved since vaccinations are now widely available for front-line workers. Exclusions for other reasons are being examined more closely to allow us to develop strategies with our clinical and ministerial partners to increase vaccine uptake by our students.

Given that a minimum of two weeks must pass between date of vaccination and patient contact and that Summer clinical courses will start in early May, please obtain your vaccinations ASAP. Delays could result in diminished opportunities for clinical education and an inability to meet learning objectives.

II. TRAVEL

An official global advisory to travellers is in force to avoid non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice. **University-sponsored travel is currently suspended until further notice**, in keeping with government directives. Similarly, activities carried out abroad or outside of McGill (i.e., coursework, fieldwork, co-op terms or internships/stages, or research visits) are not currently being sponsored by the University. The Charter of Students' Rights outlines, in Section 18 (iii) our [obligation to provide safe and suitable conditions for learning and study](#).

In specific cases, exemptions to this suspension may be permitted for mission-critical and time-sensitive travel/activities. If this is your case, please discuss this with your Program Director. Approval will ultimately need to be given by me. For more information, click [here](#).

When it comes to *entering Canada*, all individuals including cruise passengers, must self-isolate for 14 days, including a 3-day stay in a government identified hotel. The [Financial Aid Office](#) may be able to assist you with the related hotel costs through a new program set up for this purpose.

There are no preventive isolation measures for people *entering Quebec from other Canadian provinces*. However, here again, non-essential travel should be avoided. Other provinces may

have specific rules for travellers arriving from Québec, such as [Ontario, which recently closed its borders](#). To find out what they are, go to the destination province's [COVID-19 information website](#).

For all those enrolled in summer courses and for those returning to their studies for the Fall semester, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you, **as students of nursing, you have additional professional responsibilities over and above other students when it comes to mobility**. These include restrictions in movement to the extent possible between your clinical placement sites, your sites of employment and other activities outside your home, including travel. Please avoid non-essential travel and if you must travel, please be sure to follow the public health guidelines.

III. FALL ON CAMPUS

The University is returning to in-person activities to the fullest extent possible as of the Fall 2021 semester. Therefore, **all ISON students, faculty and staff should plan to be in Montreal so that they can be onsite at McGill for the Fall semester**. While some components of courses will harness the pedagogical benefits of remote teaching, students and teaching staff are expected to plan for a more regular rhythm of on-campus academic activity by September, as the public health situation allows. For more information on University directives regarding this, click [here](#). A videotape of the Town Hall held on Tuesday (April 20th) with the McGill community to discuss this topic can be found [here](#).

As a health professional school which offers academic nursing programs to those already licensed as nurses, in addition to those yet to be licensed, ISON planning for Fall return to campus is including consideration of elements related to the complex interplay of the health care delivery and educational environments in which our students will be immersed. A few of these elements are listed below, certain of these elicit significant domino effects in both nursing education and practice, regardless of academic program.

- Cancellation of study or other leaves for students and/or Clinical Instructors;
- Requirements for mobility restrictions from one clinical area/hospital/CIUSSS to another;
- Quarantine requirements between changes in clinical sites or post-exposure to COVID-19;
- Sudden changes in shift assignments of working students

Details of Fall academic program delivery are being reviewed for each course. Decisions regarding these will be forthcoming in the next weeks. Please rest assured that your well-being, together with delivery of high-quality education remain ISON's top priorities.



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Please do not hesitate to share any concerns or questions you may have with your elected NUS and NGSAs representatives, or feel free to send your feedback to me via email: directoradmin.nursing@mcgill.ca.

Best regards and stay safe,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anita J. Gagnon".

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