

Re: COVID-19-related update from the Director

February 2, 2021

Dear Students,

This is the third and final edition of the current series of weekly messages related to your studies at the Ingram School of Nursing (ISoN) in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. At the January 25th Town Hall, it was deemed unnecessary to continue weekly Town Halls and email updates, as both the quantity and urgency of students' questions and concerns appear to have declined considerably. It was decided that students will instead go to their student representatives (NUS and NGSA) for future questions and concerns. The student representatives will then bring these issues to me at our regularly scheduled meetings moving forward. Broad email updates and Student Town Halls will be organized as-needed. An archive of all weekly updates can be found on our website, organized by date, [here](#).

I will cover three topics this week: (1) COVID-19 vaccinations for students; (2) Phase 2 of MSSS Bursary Program; and (3) Community Isolation

I. COVID-19 VACCINATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Since my last weekly message to you, ISoN has received an update from the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) that they may be able to begin vaccinating students in the coming days, pending certain permissions. Once they receive the necessary permissions, they will have a very tight timeline to notify students of the process, and to schedule their appointments. To that end, **it is very important that students' contact information (email address and phone number) be up-to-date and indicated in HSPnet.**

II. PHASE 2 OF MSSS BURSARY PROGRAM

As you are aware from the previous update, the MSSS accepted all Phase-1 applications that were submitted to them from ISoN. We do not yet have confirmation regarding the results of Phase 2. Thanks again to all of you who considered this opportunity to support our healthcare system.

III. COMMUNITY ISOLATION

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you, as students **of nursing**, of your 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 any other activities outside your home. As you are already aware, students are being permitted by our clinical partners to attend clinical placements while maintaining

employment in the same or other healthcare institutions or elsewhere. This might strike you as incongruous when you consider restrictions placed on your soon-to-be colleagues working on hospital units. The reason that our partners have made this decision is that they are acutely aware of the need for more nurses to join them in the healthcare system. They want you to graduate and recognize that requiring you to give up employment elsewhere in order to complete your clinical education would often be an untenable situation for you given the expenses of food and lodging. They also believe that you understand and will follow your employment institution's restrictions and guidelines related to mobility as well as public health guidelines in place at work and elsewhere.

With respect to your clinical placements, restrictions may vary amongst our clinical partners and you should follow the guidelines provided by each institution. It should be noted that our clinical partners are not imposing any restrictions other than those stated in their onboarding materials. They do, however, expect our students to continue to be vigilant and disclose any potential issues that may arise. They understand that working is a necessity and expect students to be honest about any situation that may put patients at risk.

In the case of student loss of employment due to this issue or any other one related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, McGill's Scholarships and Student Aid Office has discussed their ability to be more generous as appropriate on a case-by-case basis due to an extra one-time grant they have from the Quebec government for COVID-related financial need, to which 'community isolation' requirements apply. The Office also wanted our students to be aware of the following:

- i. Loss of employment may be covered by the temporary improvements to Employment Insurance due to the pandemic federal relief measures. Claimants who were only working part-time can qualify with 120 insurable hours. For more information, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/notice-covid-19.html> ;
- ii. McGill Aid can cover financial need (the gap between resources and costs which include tuition/fees/books/basic living). It cannot cover the totality of lost revenue. They also have to work within the constraints/exemption thresholds imposed by Quebec's government aid program;
- iii. Any student concerned about their financial situation due to these unexpected restrictions related to community isolation are welcome to apply for in-course financial aid in Minerva and then call 514-398-6013 or email student.aid@mcgill.ca for an appointment, even if they have already received aid this year from McGill's Scholarships and Student Aid Office

A final note on this issue, our Clinical Partnerships Office is currently surveying students to prepare for the summer semester. This survey requires **students to provide information about their workplaces in order to manage mobility issues and community isolation for the summer semester. I'd like to remind all students of the importance of completing this survey as requested.**



Ingram School of Nursing École des sciences infirmières Ingram

Please do not hesitate to share any concerns or questions you may have with your elected NUS and NGSa representatives, or feel free to send your feedback to me directly through my assistant, Irina Cazac, at directoradmin.nursing@mcgill.ca.

Best regards and stay safe,

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

Anita J. Gagnon RN, MPH, PhD
Associate Dean and Director
Ingram School of Nursing
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Cc: McGill Dean of Students
 FMHS Communications Office
 ISoN-based faculty and staff