All

I will apologize in advance for a lengthy email. Please read this in its entirety and let your classmates know.

We are in uncharted waters. Your education is important to me. Your health is more important.

The landscape for medicine and medical education is going to be in flux for the next few weeks. Expect further information on an ongoing basis.

1. Your health
As per my email on Tuesday, you need to follow the guidelines from AHS and the University. If you are exposed to someone with COVID 19 (or possible COVID19), if you have travelled, if you are unwell: do not come to work/school. Call 811. The wait will be long. You can also try to contact Student Health Student Wellness Services or AHS Workplace Health and Safety Workplace Health & Safety 1-855-450-3619 for advice. The wait will be long. I can’t guarantee that they will have a perfect answer for you, but its worth trying.

Wear PPE as advised by your preceptors and any health care providers you are working with. Wash your hands. A lot.

2. Clinical experiences
Clinical placements are going to be changing for many of you. There are several clinical locations that are already closed to learners (e.g. emergency rooms at several sites). We are being contacted by more clerks every day who are having their electives canceled (both electives in progress and planned). If this happens for you, please email me, Sibyl, elective@ucalgary.ca (Yuan) and Dr. Meira Louis, the electives course chair. We will try to reschedule in an elective here in Calgary. You may have limited choice for those electives based on capacity. For mandatory rotations that are affected, we will have to work to find alternate clinical placements; again, this will depend on capacity and therefore we may have very limited choice. Anyone who is affected will be contacted directly.

We may need to contemplate more drastic changes in terms of clinical placement of learners. I can assure you that there are a lot of educational leaders throughout UME and the University that are contemplating all of this very seriously. We will update you with any further decisions.

At present, our normal rules apply: if you have to miss clinical time because you are sick or quarantined, that time has to be made up. Again, if there is widespread loss of capacity for you to be in clinical placements, that may change.

3. Other learning experiences
The University has advised us to prepare for all teaching and learning to go online (not in person). That affects the pre-clerkship mostly (we’re planning to do all of Course IV through ‘distance learning’ — imagine that!). For your clerkship learning sessions that are currently
done with in-person sessions, they will likely move to on-line formats (e.g. you may get a podcast or a learning resource like an article and then do interactive learning by discussing that with a preceptor or having a Zoom session). My ask would be that you plan to participate in these learning sessions as actively as possible.

4. Travel
Short story: my advice would be to avoid travel. Airlines are potentially dangerous for exposure. Travelling for an elective (as outlined above), even in Canada, may not work — your elective may be cancelled. Travelling for recreation carries similar risk from the travel itself and may lead to you not being allowed to go back to a clinical rotation.

I’ve added a document that was sent out yesterday from Workplace Health and Safety to AHS physicians yesterday. It spells things out in more detail around this.

5. MCC Exams
For the 2020s, we have a call in to the MCC about what the plans are for the April/May sitting of the MCC part 1 exam. No information about this yet.

6. Be Thoughtful
Look after yourselves and look after each other. Please keep in mind that your preceptors may have significant issues related to their clinical and leadership roles that may be taking priority over their work as a teacher. I suspect if you were working with me in clinic this afternoon that you might find me a bit distracted. To that end, please be aware that if you contact me by email, I may be slow getting back to you. Similarly, we will be curtailing the number of face-to-face meetings I arrange. We’ll have to prioritize our time carefully.

I will communicate with you further as the situation evolves.

KB

Kevin Busche MD BSc FRCPC
Assistant Professor
Department of Clinical Neurosciences

Assistant Dean
Undergraduate Medical Education
Cumming School of Medicine
University of Calgary

UME: 403 210 3841 | RGH: 403 943 3214
kdbusche@ucalgary.ca