



College Health Amidst COVID-19: A Brave New (Virtual) World

An Update from the Director of the Integrated Student Health Center at Oregon Tech

As a parent of a college student myself, I can imagine the concern that you must be experiencing during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. I wanted to assure you that the Integrated Student Health Center (ISHC) has worked closely with our local Public Health Division and the Oregon Health Authority to develop procedures that allow our staff to remain safe while continuing to meet the needs of our students. We have taken precautions to keep our healthy students healthy and to work with our struggling or ill students to get them on a better track. In addition, we have adjusted our mental health services in order to be able to provide support to students who may no longer be physically in the area or are opting to not come in person. Here's what we have done:

- **Scheduling Adjustments** – We continue to meet with medical patients in person. With the start of Spring term, we will be making medical appointments in the morning for healthy students (including blood draws, immunizations, medication management, and so on) and appointments in the afternoon for ill students. This lowers the risk of being exposed to COVID-19 or other illnesses for our healthy students, and allows the facility to be cleaned sufficiently to prepare for the following day.
- **Increased Sanitizing** – Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, we have increased the frequency and intensity with which we clean and sanitize the clinic. After each patient, the examination rooms, lobby, reception area, door handles and any other space that the patient inhabited during their visit is cleaned with CDC COVID-19-effective products. We contract with a medical custodial service company which has increased their daily sanitization efforts, as well.
- **Personal Protective Equipment** – Students are being asked to wear surgical masks upon entering the building, and the medical staff are in full protective equipment mode (face shields, gowns, masks, and of course gloves)

- **Social Distancing** – Changes have also been made with regards to scheduling in order to reduce the number of students who are waiting for appointments. Appointments are being spread out throughout the day in order to minimize traffic and interaction in the lobby. Any students waiting in the lobby are monitored to ensure appropriate social distancing. The glass divider at reception is only opened enough to allow interaction with students.
- **Medical Screening for On-campus Students** – The medical staff are completing a thorough medical screening interview with each student who will be staying on campus in the Residence Hall or the Village as well as with any student worker who will be on campus for the Spring term. The screenings are meant to identify any student who should self-isolate (i.e. if they have returned to campus from a “hot spot”), not return to campus (i.e. if they have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19), or if they should simply engage in the social distancing that we are all encouraged to do.
- **Telehealth Support** – Although we continue to meet with students in person, the ISHC counseling staff is available to conduct sessions through both telephone and video conferencing (using HIPAA-compliant Zoom). The medical staff are exploring virtual visit options, as well.

Please know that we continue to offer the same quality mental health and medical support that we have always provided. We are shifting to this brave, new virtual world along with everyone else – our students, being as tech-savvy as they are, are actually adjusting quite well. So, we are listening to what they have to say and trying to meet their needs in new and different ways. If you have questions, do not hesitate to call at 541-885-1800.

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