



Newsletter

Dear Students,

We wanted to remind you that we are planning for our school's LCME review in March of 2027. The LCME is the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, and they are our accrediting body. Accreditation is important to you as it allows you to continue your education into residency and fellowship. It is important for us as it allows us to continue to recruit outstanding students.

This newsletter is the second of many to provide you with information that will help you prepare for your role during that visit.

Soon, you will be asked to complete the ISA – Independent Student Analysis. The ISA is a student lead initiative which creates a survey for you to complete and then analyze so that the results can be provided to the LCME. The LCME will use the results to focus upon areas of your medical school where improvements are needed.

We'd like you to answer these questions accurately, and we'd like to equip you with the information to do just that.

In this second newsletter, we would like to focus on **“Student Services – Medical Student Health, Safety and Well-Being”**.

The Renaissance School of Medicine is committed to training physicians to not only care for their patients, but to also care for themselves.

With this in mind, we'd like to remind you about our medical student health programs, our efforts towards medical student well-being and the policies we have in place to assure that you are working in a safe environment. These areas are highlighted on our website as well:

[Click here to access the Medical Student Health, Safety & Well-Being page](#)

Medical Student Health

We have taken steps to assure that you have access to personal health care services, mental health services and personal counseling during the pre-clerkship and clerkship phases of our medical education program.

First, Stony Brook University offers all medical students a health insurance plan that pays for most medically necessary bills, such as doctor visits, mental health counseling, prescriptions, emergency room visits, lab testing, diagnostic testing, surgery and hospitalization.

Additionally, SBU provides the Student Health Center, the on-campus source for meeting all students' primary health care needs. The staff of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, health educators, laboratory technologists, technicians and administrators are dedicated to the mission of providing students with quality medical care, and the services necessary to optimize preventive health and wellness.

SBU also offers personal counseling to all medical students through the offices of **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**. CAPS offers free and confidential services to medical students including crisis intervention; counseling for individuals, couples and groups; medication management; and assistance with referrals to community resources. Services are offered at 2 locations: The primary CAPS office is located on Stony Brook's main/west campus on the second floor of the Student Health Center and houses 25 staff members from the disciplines of clinical psychology, social work psychology, psychiatry and nurse practitioners in psychiatry. There is also an office located at the HSC so that medical students can have on-site access for individual and group counseling appointments.

Here's a list of all the services available:

- **Scheduled Counseling:** scheduled mental health counseling appointments to speak to a licensed counselor of your choice, at a time convenient for you (up to 12 visits per year).
- **Urgent/Crisis Appointments:** urgent or crisis appointments from the hours of 9-5 Monday through Friday.
- **TalkNow:** 24/7 on-demand access to speak with a mental health professional about anything on your mind.
- **TimelyCare:** a telehealth platform that provides 24/7 virtual access to medical and mental health services, right from your mobile device or computer.
- **"Group Reflections" — Medical Student Support Group:** a student-facilitated, weekly support group open to all medical students across all four class years. It offers an informal space to discuss challenges, share experiences and gain advice from peers at different stages of training.

See the CAPS website for more information:

[Click here to access the CAPS page.](#)

Please know that all care is confidential, and although CAPS and the medical school work closely together to ensure that the highest possible quality of support services are offered and promoted to medical students, CAPS operates as a separate administrative entity from the medical school. Records are stored and maintained separately by CAPS, and the medical school does not have any means of access to student counseling records unless the student provides written legal consent to have their records released to the medical school. None of the providers in CAPS have any role in the evaluation of medical students.

Additionally, you are always welcome to request excused absences from mandatory activities for medical and mental health services.

Well-Being

The provision of medical and mental health services is not all that we have done to address medical student well-being. Rather, we have made major and minor adjustments and additions to help our students better care for themselves.

The following are two examples of major changes to our curriculum that were made over the past several years, changes that were specifically driven by our students.

First, our students informed us that the preclinical curriculum evaluation methods, specifically the 5-tier (honors, high pass, pass, low pass and fail) system created unnecessary stress and competition amongst the class. We responded by converting our preclinical curriculum evaluation to a 2-tier, pass/fail, format. Now our students learn collaboratively. Students work together rather than in competition.

Second, our students told us that the Phase II, the clerkship phase, of our curriculum was too strenuous. There were no breaks between the busy 12-week blocks, and this interfered with student ability to care for themselves. We responded by creating three wellness breaks between each block. This change was very popular amongst our students and has given them the time they need to relax, reconnect and rejuvenate.

Other additions include the student creation of the **MeSH (Medical Student Happiness, Health and Humanism)** group, the mentoring PODS, the hiring of a 2nd Learning Specialist/Success Coach, the formation of a peer-tutoring program and the addition of HSC student life calendar events.

We will continue to listen to you all and adapt additional suggestions when feasible.

Safety

Your safety in the clinical environment is one of our highest priorities. Having said that, contact with patients is an integral part of the medical education at the Renaissance School of Medicine and this contact may entail exposure to hazards, including exposure to patients with contagious diseases that can be transmitted to students by way of airborne droplets or needle-puncture wounds. Examples of these diseases include tuberculosis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. Although the risk of contracting serious illness from these hazards is very small, the medical school seeks to reduce incidents of students' exposure to infectious diseases and environmental hazards. Students are mandated to complete educational trainings on universal precautions for bloodborne pathogens and protection strategies against airborne and droplet pathogens during the Transition to Clinical Care course, which students take prior to beginning their clinical clerkship rotations. Additionally, an Infection Control PowerPoint presentation is available online and may be accessed by any student at any time.

Because of the increasing prevalence of tuberculosis and the appearance of multiple drug-resistant strains and the emergence of novel airborne pathogens, all of our students are required to receive a micro-particulate respirator and obtain respirator certification through Stony Brook Environmental Health and Safety. Furthermore, students are reminded about how to protect themselves against airborne droplets right before their clinical experiences in the Introduction to Clinical Medicine course.

Additionally, all clinical students receive and are expected to carry in their ID Badge holder the most recent Exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens Card which includes Universal Precautions and what to do in case of exposure to a potential blood-borne pathogen for each of our clinical sites. Additionally, students receive training in proper blood-drawing techniques and patient-isolation policies prior to the intense clinical exposure in Phases II and III. Finally, the school reserves the right to restrict student contact with a patient believed to pose a risk to the health of the student.

The following are instructions in the policy for what students should do should they experience a needlestick or blood-borne pathogen exposure from a splash or sharps during clinical or educational activities.

If a student is exposed to the blood of a patient, the following is recommended:

1. Immediately following an exposure to blood: "Wash needle stick or sharps induced injuries and cuts with soap and water. Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water. Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline or sterile irrigation solution.
2. Immediately inform the supervising resident or attending physician and complete an incident report. Prompt reporting is essential because, in some cases, postexposure treatment may be recommended, and it should be started as soon as possible. The student who sustains occupational exposure should access postexposure services within hours as opposed to days, after the exposure.
3. Go to the appropriate Post-Exposure Services depending on where the exposure occurred:
 - a. **Stony Brook University Hospital (Monday-Friday 8 am–4 pm):** Go immediately to Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) Services at Stony Brook University Hospital, located on Level 8, Room 140. All other times, go immediately to the Emergency Department at Stony Brook University Hospital.
 - b. **Southampton Hospital and South Nassau Communities Hospital:** Go to the Emergency Department (ED).
 - c. **VA Medical Center and Nassau University Medical Center:** Go to Employee Health during regular business hours and the Emergency Department at all other times.
4. The clinician in EHW or the ED will contact the source patient's physician, nurse practitioner, midwife, or physician's assistant to determine whether the source's HIV, HBV or HCV status are known. If the HIV status of the source patient is known, the information may be accessed from the medical record to assist in the decision-making process for initiation of PEP. If the HIV status of the patient is not known, consent for voluntary HIV testing of the source patient will be sought as soon as possible after the exposure.
5. If the student is treated in the Emergency Department, they may only be given a one- or two-day supply of post-exposure medication. All students should go to Stony Brook University Student Health Services on West Campus for follow-up treatment and counseling.
6. After a student has reported the blood-borne exposure and received initial management from the Emergency Department, they should inform the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education of the incident.

Reminders about all of this information can be found in our Policies and Procedures manual:

[Click here to access the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual](#)

and on our website: [Click here to access the Medical Student Health, Safety & Well-Being page](#)

Your health, well-being and safety is a major priority. Please continue to reach us to us providing suggestions for improvement.

Sincerely,
Andrew Wackett, MD
Vice Dean of UGME