The New York School for Medical and Dental Assistants’ Plan to Re-Open for Laboratory Classes

Introduction
At The New York School for Medical and Dental Assistants, Inc. (NYSMDA), it is our priority to keep our students, employees, and their families healthy, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we will abide by governmental guidelines when possible as we strive to balance public health concerns with the needs of our school. This return to school action plan details how we plan to reopen our school and keep all our students and employees safe to every extent possible. This plan, which pulls from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance, highlights the responsibilities of students and employees, and outlines the steps NYSMDA is taking to address COVID-19. Suggestions from students, faculty and staff were instrumental in the development of this plan.

While we will implement various protocols to ensure your safety, it is up to you and your fellow students to execute on these protocols daily. By releasing this return to school action plan, NYSMDA hopes to clearly communicate our plans moving forward, highlight protocols in place to protect your safety and establish a level of comfort for all of our employees as we ask you to return to the school.

We understand that every individual’s situation is different and encourage those with specific risks or concerns to reach out to their program chairperson to discuss alternate arrangements, should they be necessary.

NYSMDA Efforts to Make Facility Safe
To make the facility safe for laboratory classes NYSMDA has done the following:

- Deep cleaned the entire facility
- Installed Medify air purifiers in all laboratory classrooms.
- Installed soap dispensers and hand sanitizing dispensers in all laboratory classrooms
- Installed hand sanitizing stations in the common areas
- Stockpiled PPE including KN-95 masks, surgical masks, surgical gowns and gloves
Protocols to Follow When Returning to School

NYSMDA has implemented various protocols designed to preserve the health and safety of our students and employees as they return to the school. This section further explains these protocols. For additional information, please reach out to your supervisor or department chair.

Procedures for Entering the Facility

Upon entering the facility be sure that your nose and mouth are covered with a face covering. After arriving in the lobby walk up stairwell A that is on the right side of the building assuming you are facing the front of the building. When arriving immediately take your temperature in the lobby and fill out the required online COVID-19 questionnaire.

In the event that your temperature is over 100.4 degrees (per CDC guidelines) or the administration deems you to be at risk based on your answers to the attached questionnaire we respectfully will ask you to vacate the premises with a recommendation to get yourself tested and return home to self-quarantine. If at any time after being screened you do not feel well please notify your teacher if you are in-school or your program director if you are not in-school.

If the instructor feels safe to let you into the room, you will be granted entry. Once you are in the room immediately wash your hands with soap and water for a minimum of twenty (20) seconds. The instructor will provide you with two (2) masks, a standard surgical mask, and a KN-95 mask. You are expected to wear the standard surgical mask underneath the KN-95 mask. These masks are always to be worn while you are in class. You will be issued one standard surgical mask daily and you will be issued one KN-95 mask weekly.

When class is over stow the KN-95 mask in the bag that it was originally packaged. Gather your belongings and exit the building through Stairwell B which is the opposite stairwell from the one that you entered. Please do not loiter after class as this is for the health and safety of all NYSMDA students and staff members.

Safety Procedures for Faculty and Staff Entry

PPE will be provided for all faculty and staff personnel. The procedures listed above will also be followed for all faculty and staff who enter the building. The temperature readings and questionnaire will be administered by the employee’s supervisor. Faculty and staff will not be required to wear PPE if they are in a private office and they are the only person in that office. If a faculty member or a staff member enters an area with students than he/she will be required to wear both a surgical mask, and a KN-95 mask. If a staff member leaves his/her office or another person enters the office, he/she will be required to wear a face covering that covers both the nose and the mouth.
COVID-19 Exposure and Confirmed Illness Protocol

Reporting Protocol
If a student or employee tests positive for COVID-19, the results should be immediately communicated with the Program Chair or the employee’s supervisor and reported via the online Positive COVID-19 Reporting Form. The individual should look back 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or the date of the positive test if there are no symptoms. The submission of this form will allow NYSMDA to determine if the impacted student was in close contact with anyone else, along with which areas the impacted student visited and may require specialized cleaning.

Students and employees may refer to the flowchart, What to do if a student becomes sick at school or reports a new COVID-19 Diagnosis, for step-by-step procedures and subsequent actions.

Campus Notifications
NYSMDA maintains records of who is expected to be on campus and lab classroom schedules each day in order to improve contact tracing accuracy to identify, monitor, and support confirmed cases and positive cases close contacts who have been exposed, and possibly infected with the virus.

To ensure transparency when positive cases are identified, the following communication protocols will be supported:

- NYSMDA is identifying positive cases and the primary lab class impacted, if any, and performing contact tracing to identify anyone individually at risk.
- If a case can be attributed within a single lab classroom, the Program Chair will notify any potentially exposed individuals from that class as well as any other lab classes the student may be attending.
- NYSMDA will notify both the New York City and New York State Departments of Health if the person tested positive and was on campus within two weeks of their positive test.

Close Contact Exposure
If it is determined that a potentially exposed individual did experience close contact with a positive COVID-19 case, they will be instructed to follow the self-quarantine procedures outlined by the CDC and are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 5-7 days after they last had contact with the affected person. If an exposed individual begins to experience symptoms, they should seek advice from a medical professional.

Definition of Close Contact
Close contact is defined by the CDC as being less than six feet away from a positive COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more or having direct contact with the infectious secretions of a positive COVID-19 case, such as being coughed on.

What counts as a close contact?
- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you
What does not count as a close contact?
Incidental contact with or exposure to someone who is COVID-positive is generally low risk and not deemed a close contact. Examples of scenarios that would likely not lead to being a close contact:

- Having a short conversation, wearing masks, and more than 6 feet apart;
- Passing in the hallway;
- Working in the same building;
- Classroom setup is applying good social distancing practices (desks are placed 6 feet apart and everyone is wearing masks).

Cleaning Protocol
If an individual is reported as having a confirmed case of COVID-19 and has been at NYSMDA College location within the past 14 days, cleaning protocols in accordance to [CDC recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov) will be implemented to clean and disinfect all affected areas the individual may have visited. Access to all identified areas will be restricted for a minimum of 24 hours while they are thoroughly sanitized. Only once all areas have been appropriately cleaned and disinfected can the applicable space be reopened.

- All windows and doors to the classroom, work area or bathrooms that the student or employee occupied will be left open to increase airflow and an additional Medify Air Purifier will be brought into these areas.
- Classrooms, heightened cleaning, and disinfection of common areas will be performed by custodial staff.
- Faculty and students are also responsible for disinfecting surfaces and equipment after lab use, following NYSMDA cleaning and disinfection guidelines.

Returning to campus Post Positive COVID-19 Result and/or Exposure
Students or employees who test positive for COVID-19 or believe they have been infected will be instructed to follow the advice of a qualified medical professional and self-isolate. When self-isolating, individual should:

- Stay away from other people in their home as much as possible, staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom if available.
- Not allow visitors.
- Wear a face mask if they must be around people.
- Avoid sharing household items, including drinking cups, eating utensils, towels, and bedding.
- Clean high-touch surfaces daily.
- Continue monitoring their symptoms, calling their health care provider if their condition worsens.

Students, employees, or the close contacts of an affected individual, who are symptomatic/asymptomatic, or who have a lab-confirmed positive COVID-19 test result should not return to work or school until the conditions outlined in the table below are met:
### Return to School Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student or employee was symptomatic but was not tested for COVID-19</th>
<th>Student or employee was symptomatic but tested negative for COVID-19</th>
<th>Student or employee tested positive for COVID-19</th>
<th>Close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 (in school or in their household)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The student or employee may return to school if:  
  - They have not had a fever (less than 100.4°F) for at least 72 hours and have not used fever-reducing medication during that time.  
  - Coughs, shortness of breath, and other symptoms have improved.  
  - They had a negative test for COVID-19 after the onset of symptoms. | The student or employee may return to school if:  
  - They have not had a fever (less than 100.4°F) for at least 72 hours and have not used fever-reducing medication during that time.  
  - Coughs, shortness of breath, and other symptoms have improved. | The student or employee may return to school if:  
  - They have not had a fever (less than 100.4°F) for at least 72 hours and have not used fever-reducing medication during that time.  
  - Coughs, shortness of breath, and other symptoms have improved.  
  - They have received two negative COVID-19 tests in a row after meeting the above criteria or they have self-quarantined for 14 days after their positive test. | The close contact of positive COVID-19 case (student, faculty, or household member) may return to campus if:  
  - They completed 14 day quarantine since the last contact with the positive case (even if they receive a negative result before the 14 days has passed)  
  - Received a negative COVID-19 test following 14 days of quarantine |

### Traveling
If a student or employee travels outside of the tri-state area, then prior to returning to campus the individual must either quarantine for 14 days or quarantine for 72 hours and then receive a negative COVID-19 test.

### Accommodations for Students
NYSMDA will offer accommodations to students adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic wherever possible. Such accommodations might include extension of deadlines related to disruption of classroom activities or leaves of absence relating to prolonged illness or bereavement.

### Lab courses
In case students are unable to continue attending lab courses on campus due to COVID-19 positive test results and/or quarantine, students are expected to continue taking their online courses and complete makeup hours for missed lab classes at a later date.
Social Distancing Protocol
Students and employees should follow social distancing best practices while at NYSMDA, including but not limited to workstations, lounges, common areas and office spaces. Specifically, students and employees are asked to:

- Stay 6 feet away from others when working or on breaks. Where a minimum distance cannot be maintained strict adherence to the face covering rule is essential.
- Avoid job tasks that require face-to-face work with others when possible.
- Avoid contact with others whenever possible (e.g., handshakes).
- Avoid touching surfaces that may have been touched by others when possible.
- Distance themselves from anyone who appears to be sick.
- Avoid gathering when entering and exiting the facility. Students and employees should also only enter through Stairwell A and exit through Stairwell B.
- Avoid using the elevator whenever possible
- Follow any posted signage regarding COVID-19 social distancing practices.
- Disinfect workspace often.
- Avoid touching their face.
- Avoid nonessential gatherings.
- Avoid using common areas as much as possible.

Student and Employee Health and Safety Protocols
The success of our return to school action plan relies on how well our students and employees follow social distancing and health and safety protocols. As such, the following protocols have been implemented to ensure your health and safety. Please bring any concerns regarding the following protocols to a supervisor or program chair immediately.

General Employee Health and Hygiene
Practicing good hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Do your part by practicing good hygiene at work and at home:

- Regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds throughout the day with warm water and soap, especially before eating.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

To help students and employees remain healthy, NYSMDA has hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes available throughout the school. We have limited amounts of these supplies and will continue to restock as we are able. It is suggested that students and employees wash their hands more frequently than normal. Additionally, management has instructed the office cleaning crew to disinfect key areas such as faucets and door handles daily. The cleaning crew will be wiping down all surface areas whenever a class is on break.

In addition, employees and students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings when in public and when physical distancing of 6 feet or more cannot be guaranteed. Employees and students must wear face coverings when entering and exiting the building and when using common areas such as the bathrooms, lounges, hallways, and the lobby.
Finally, students and employees who are feeling sick are asked to stay home. Students and employees
who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness, should immediately seek medical attention, and follow
the guidance of a health care provider.

Student and Employee Mental Health Considerations
NYSMDA understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased stress levels across the country. We
want to prioritize our student and employee mental health during these uncertain times. As such, we
have made every effort to ensure that the facility is safe for students and employees to return to work
and are ready to discuss personal situations. Managers and supervisors are aware of mental health
considerations during this transition. Students with concerns regarding their mental health should
request additional resources from their program chairperson.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol
Students and employees should do their part to help keep the school as clean as possible by cleaning
and disinfecting their workstations and surfaces they commonly use. Whenever a common piece of
equipment is used, it should be wiped down prior to and following use. Proper cleaning and disinfecting
supplies will be provided by NYSMDA. Students and employees should wash their hands with warm
water and soap for at least 20 seconds after cleaning or sanitizing a surface.

Phases of Reopening Classes
Phase 1
Students return for only the laboratory portion of their clinical classes. If a course has a laboratory
component and a theory component the theory will be taught online and the students will return only
for the lab component. There will be no more than 10 students in any classroom and no more than 50
students in the school’s 20,500 square foot facility at any time. The seating will be spaced out so that
everyone will be at least six (6) feet apart. Classes will only take part in the lab classrooms and each lab
classroom as well as the bathrooms will be equipped with an appropriately sized Medify Air Purifier. As
discussed above, NYSMDA has obtained adequate PPE. Every student will be issued a surgical mask daily
and a KN-95 mask on a weekly basis. In the classroom they will be required to wear both masks. The
school also has face shields and gowns that are available to teachers and students. The school intends
to implement this phase as soon as possible.

Phase 2
In phase 2 all courses that have a laboratory component will be held on campus. Selective didactic
courses where online instruction is not as effective will also be held on campus. For Dental Assisting,
these courses will include Computer Applications and Dental Practice Management. For Medical
Assisting, these courses will include: Mathematic Skills, Mathematics in Contemporary Society, Human
Biology, Computer Applications and Principles of Health Insurance and Office Management.

The social distancing guidelines and the PPE requirements listed in Phase 1 will still be applicable in
Phase 2. During this phase NYSMDA will schedule classes so that there are no more than 100 students in
the school at any one time. The school intends to implement this phase when it is deemed safe to have
100 students in its facility.
Shutdown

In the event that more than 5 NYSMDA students, faculty or staff who have been on campus test positive for COVID-19 in a one (1) month time period, or the New York City positive test rate for the virus exceeds 5% on a seven (7) day moving average for the virus in New York City, then all didactic instruction will be on-line including didactic instruction in courses that have a lab component. If ten (10) NYSMDA students, faculty of staff test positive for COVID-19 in a one (1) month time period or the New York City positive test rate for the virus exceeds 10% on a seven (7) day moving average, than NYSMDA will suspend all on-campus classes.

The New York City statistics referenced above will be obtained through the following website:

https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data.page

Conclusion

NYSMDA looks forward to the future of our students returning to the school and continuing their education. The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertain times and resulted in unprecedented changes. As communicated throughout this return to school action plan, we are prioritizing the health of our students and employees every step of the way as we reopen our doors. We remain very aware of density considerations as we head into the winter.

We will execute our plan cautiously, following applicable state and local guidance as much as possible. We also understand that each student’s needs and situations will be different as our doors begin to reopen. Students and employees should discuss any concerns they have about returning to work or school as it relates to their personal health or situation with their program chairperson or the school owners.

Finally, we ask that everyone be patient and understanding of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic may require our reopening plan to change. Students, faculty, and staff will be given as much notice as possible in the event of an unforeseen setback.

Students and employees should direct questions regarding the content of this action plan to their program chairs, their direct supervisors, or the school owners. Furthermore, while the strategies highlighted in this document are intended to protect students and employees from COVID-19, it’s important to follow CDC guidance at all times.