



March 7, 2022

Dear Students,

Please pay close attention to this important message.

Our College campus has remained opened because of your diligence and care to keep our community safe. Thank you for doing your part. The purpose of this communication is to provide you with an update on our COVID-19 prevention strategies. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has published updated guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html> on when masks need to be worn in relation to community transmission levels.

Thankfully, the rate of transmission and the number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 has significantly improved in our area, our state, and the country. The campus rate of infection continues to remain very low as well. In addition, Bon Secours Mercy Health has changed their policy to mask optional within office settings. Therefore, **Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital School of Medical Imaging is moving to a mask optional policy starting on Tuesday, March 8, 2022.**

Students, staff, and faculty will have the option of wearing masks on campus. Anyone that is exempt from the COVID-19 vaccine or is at high risk for severe illness is encouraged to continue to wear a mask. In addition, other mitigation efforts will continue. Please continue to clean before and after use of an area, practice social distancing when possible, and utilize outdoor gathering tables when weather permits, **You will need to continue to monitor for symptoms and plan not to be around others if you are sick.** Many of us are used to ignoring or pushing through signs of illness; however, we need to intentionally make different decisions to keep our campus and community safe. I would like to remind you that if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, you should not come to campus, clinical setting or be near others even if vaccinated. If you are experiencing symptoms (fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea) you should report this to your course faculty and to our COVID tracking team. To report symptoms to the COVID-19 tracking team or ask questions/seek guidance, please use this email: response@bsmcon.edu.

In addition to the mask optional change, students may also resume in-person meetings and activities. You have shown tremendous patience and grace during the time of limiting our student and organizational activities. We appreciate your understanding and support. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 community transmission levels regularly and if warranted we will communicate to you if mitigation strategies need to change. If individuals choose to wear or not wear masks, please respect their personal decision. I am so proud of our School and humbled to serve as your Dean. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jody D. Crane'.

Jody D. Crane MAEd, RT, (R), (BD)

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