

VOLUNTEERING IN ACTIVE HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENTS

Message sent on behalf of Dr. Lynn Wilson, Acting Vice-Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions

Dear Students & Post-docs,

Note the following message from U of T's Acting Vice-Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions, is important, relevant and timely to all DLSPH students and learners who are considering or engaging in volunteer opportunities in health care settings.

I know many of you are trying to find productive ways to respond to COVID-19. Some are seeking volunteer opportunities in active health care environments (e.g., door-screening at health clinics), with health care professionals who may be at a higher risk of exposure (e.g., providing child care and elder care for researchers and clinicians in our affiliated hospitals), or with potentially affected community members (e.g., assisting isolated and vulnerable seniors).

First, I want to commend you on your commitment to public service and to supporting the broader efforts to combat the COVID-19 virus. It's a testament to your commitment to addressing the health needs of our local and global communities. We must all make our own decisions about what level of risk we are willing to accept. As future health professionals, I know you'll make the responsible decisions. And, I know that many of you are also exploring lower-risk volunteer opportunities as well.

The purpose of this email is to give you some general information, should you decide to engage in these activities, so you can make *informed* decisions and keep yourselves as safe as possible.

Specifically, I want you to know that these volunteer opportunities are independent of academic studies and the University, even if the activities take place on sites that are affiliated with the University (e.g. at major hospitals or with academic appointees requesting volunteers). As a volunteer, the University's insurance coverage, WSIB coverage through the University (including the coverage applicable during student placements), financial support, or logistical support would not be available to you.

Unless the organization or site at which you are volunteering makes it available to you, as a volunteer, you may only be covered in case of injury or illness in the course of volunteering through OHIP/UHIP and your extended health coverage plan, if you have one.

Please make sure you are protecting yourself, following public health advice, and informing yourself of the potential risks of any volunteer opportunity. We ask that you continue to consult the University's [central webpage](#) for links to public health authorities, travel advisories, and student supports including mental health resources.

Please stay safe and take care of yourself during these difficult times as you try to help others.

Thank you,

Dr. Lynn Wilson MD, CCFP, FCFP
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