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Policy Area:	COVID-19
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Applicability:	St. Lawrence Health System Wide Content

SLHS COVID-19 TRAVEL POLICY

PURPOSE

We know healthcare staff are in high demand across the country and have been limiting their personal travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 persists, St. Lawrence Health System urges staff to limit travel, practice social distancing, and avoid all mass transit travel including air, train, or bus when possible.

The St. Lawrence Health System's COVID-19 Travel Policy is designed to provide standardized system-wide guidance concerning travel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SCOPE

All St. Lawrence Health System affiliate entities and all workforce members including, but not limited to, physicians, contractors, and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

"Commuter" is a staff member who travels from outside of the North Country (defined below) to work on a regular basis, including Canada.

"North Country" includes the following New York state counties: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence.

"Travel" is long-distance, overnight travel by any conveyance (e.g., aircraft, train, bus, ship, shared ride, personal vehicle) to locations within the United States. It does not include one's usual commute to work or day trips to neighboring cities.

POLICY

- St. Lawrence Health System must be prepared to fulfill its patient care mission as COVID-19 illness spreads nationally and globally.
- St. Lawrence Health System is committed to the health and safety of our staff, patients, visitors and the communities we serve.
- As a major health care provider for a large and diverse region, St. Lawrence Health System must ensure adequate staffing levels to provide safe and effective care in our hospitals and clinics.
- Individuals who travel domestically or internationally during this rapidly changing global public health threat may:
 - Be exposed to and spread the virus that causes COVID-19 disease, even if they do not exhibit

- symptoms
- Be required (possibly along with members of their household) to self-quarantine at home up to 14 days upon return, at the discretion of St. Lawrence Health System.
- Be unable to return home on schedule, due to mid-trip developments at their destination
- Be subject to federal quarantine, possibly at a location far removed from their home
- Become ill with COVID-19 disease, with potentially serious health implications
- To protect the health of our staff and patients, and consistent with guidance from the St. Lawrence County Department of Health, St. Lawrence Health System has put into place the following new requirements, and guidance regarding travel for all staff.
- These instructions and recommendations involve both health system-sponsored and personal travel and will be in effect until further notice.

Effective immediately, the travel policy states:

- Staff should exercise prudence when traveling and consider delaying unnecessary travel. Staff who have plans to travel should check the CDC's travel advisory website and the Department of State's travel advisory website referenced below for guidance. These agencies advise and issue notices on the status of travel to foreign locations and, as appropriate, within the United States.
- Before a staff member chooses to travel during this public health threat, they should carefully evaluate the potential implications outlined above.
- St. Lawrence Health System sponsored travel outside of the North Country is suspended until further notice.
- If a staff member personally chooses to **travel outside of the North Country** area for any period of time (collectively "Returning Staff") then:
 - Travel Screening Form for Staff Taking PTO, Vacation, or Benefit Leave. In addition to the standard leave request, staff **MUST** notify their immediate manager of any travel plans outside of the North Country and complete a Travel Screening Form before leaving. Returning Staff must update their Travel Screening Form to reflect any deviation from the Returning Staff member's original travel plans, and confirm the appropriate infection prevention instructions on the Travel Screening Form prior to returning to work.
 - Commuter travel: Returning Staff who are Commuters must make their immediate manager aware of their reoccurring commuting plans from outside of the North Country and complete a Travel Screening Form **ONE TIME**. From time to time, if applicable, Returning Staff who are Commuters must update their Travel Screening Form to reflect any deviation from the Returning Staff member's commuting plans.
 - Returning Staff Precautions. Returning Staff may be required by St. Lawrence Health System to wear a face mask (up to and including an N-95 or equivalent) and practice other standard precautions for up to 14 days. A decision regarding whether the Returning Staff member may be asked to remain off-site will be made based upon the nature of the Returning Staff member's job and Risk Factor Score on the Travel Screening Form, as determined by St. Lawrence Health System's Chief Medical Officer and Associate Chief Medical Officer based upon CDC, the St. Lawrence Health System's Department of Infectious Disease, and other guidance regarding the current status of COVID-19 at the Returning Staff's travel destination.
 - Self-Monitor. All Returning Staff should monitor for any symptoms for fourteen (14) days and if they become ill and need to seek medical care, they should call ahead to their provider's office and inform them of their recent travel or potential exposure. If the Returning Staff remains out of the office, and the Returning Staff test negative, he or she may be allowed to return earlier. St. Lawrence Health System will notify Returning Staff of any requirements.

- It is St. Lawrence Health System's expectation that Staff who have visitors originating from outside of the North Country, who are staying within their household, exercise infection prevention precautions in their interactions with such visitors during their stay.
- All St. Lawrence Health System Returning Staff, scoring a "HIGH RISK"? on their Risk Factor Score referenced on the Travel Screening Form MUST contact Occupational Health before returning to a St. Lawrence Health System hospital campus or clinic location to determine if any additional or new protocols or procedures are in place.
- Staff who do not follow health monitoring requirements may be subject to disciplinary action.

Related Policies, Documents, & Forms

Travel Screening Form: [SLHS COVID-19 Travel Screening Form](#)

References/Citations

If planning personal international travel, refer to these sources often, before and throughout your trip, and as you plan your return:

- [CDC's COVID-19 travel page](#)
- [State Department travel advisories](#)
- [International Air Transport Association's](#) list of travel and entry restrictions
- MAPS: [NY Times COVID-19 Map](#), [John Hopkins University Map](#), [COVID-19 USA Facts Spread Map](#)
- Register with the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) and understand and routinely check any travel and border restrictions in transit, at your proposed destination, and upon your return, as planned trips to certain countries may affect your ability to return to the United States on schedule and to a St. Lawrence Health System site.

These requirements and guidance may change with little notice as the COVID-19 situation evolves, and any further recommendations will be guided by the CDC, the New York State Department of Health, and the New York City Department of Mental Health and Hygiene. We sincerely hope these policies and guidance will be temporary.

St. Lawrence is recommending that all staff keep abreast of the [CDC's general recommendations](#) for COVID-19 as well as the list of restricted countries.

Attachments

No Attachments

Approval Signatures

Approver	Date
Jeremy Slaga: Chief Administrative Officer	5/22/2020
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Applicability

Canton-Potsdam Hospital, Gouverneur Hospital, St. Lawrence Health System

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