

October 21, 2021

TO: Current and Future URI CON Nurse Practitioner Students

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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, policies and guidelines do as well. In August 2021, the Rhode Island Department of Health (“RIDOH”) issued a regulation, 216-RICR-20-15-8, which included a requirement for immunization for COVID-19 for all workers in licensed healthcare facilities and other practicing health care providers. In addition, effective October 1, 2021, Lifespan and Care New England will only allow in students who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19, or who have received a medical exemption in accordance with those facilities’ procedures, protocols and requirements. The only medical exemption form being accepted by Lifespan, Care New England, many other clinical agencies and the URI College of Nursing (CON) Nurse Practitioner program is the RIDOH medical exemption form. Link: <https://health.ri.gov/forms/immunization/Exemption-Certificate-COVID-19-Vaccination.pdf>

We cannot guarantee that clinical sites will take unvaccinated students even with a medical exemption. It may be very difficult to find preceptors and clinical sites that will accept an unvaccinated nurse practitioner student. The unavailability of clinical placements could potentially cause delays in program completion and/or graduation. We will work with students who have documented medical exemptions to try to find suitable clinical placements.

However, our clinical partners throughout Rhode Island will not accept unvaccinated students who have religious exemptions. At this time, the URI CON Nurse Practitioner program is not able to offer any out-of-state clinical placements that will accept a religious exemption for COVID-19 vaccination. Given that, unless you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or you qualify for a medical exemption under the RIDOH Medical Exemption guidelines, the CON will be unable to place you in a clinical experience with one of our preceptors. This leaves you with the following options:

- A. If you get fully vaccinated before clinical placements (by December 1 to begin clinical in Spring semester; by July 1 to begin clinical in Fall semester), you will be able to continue into the Nurse Practitioner Program clinical course sequence and clinical placement; **or**
- B. If you qualify for a medical exemption under the RIDOH form, and the form is reviewed/approved by the university and accepted by the appropriate clinical agency(cies), you will be able to complete the clinical requirements for the Nurse Practitioner program **(although there may be delays if agencies are unwilling to accept you); or**
- C. If you choose not to get fully vaccinated before the clinical course sequence and you do not qualify for a medical exemption under the RIDOH form by the dates above, you may continue only with didactic / lecture / seminar course work, provided you request and receive an exemption approval from the university under the URI COVID-19 student vaccination policy and requirements. You will be unable to participate in or complete clinical courses at this time; **or**
- D. You may defer admission or request a Leave of Absence from the Nurse Practitioner program. Students can apply to be re-admitted and accommodated in a future year on a space-available basis when they are vaccinated or the RIDOH policies and clinical agencies’ policies allow unvaccinated students into clinical sites.