



April 7, 2020

State of Maryland

**Maryland  
Institute for  
Emergency Medical  
Services Systems**

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Dear Respiratory Therapy Student:

Thank you for taking just a few moments to read this message. It relates to your special knowledge and skills in this unprecedented time for our communities and, certainly, our health care system.

In the coming weeks our health care system in Maryland expects to be tested like never before. The COVID-19 pandemic will test our capacity to deliver high quality, compassionate care to those who need it, whether for this virus or other problems we encounter routinely. As health systems, hospitals, and the Department of Health expand their capacities to care for people who will come to them for help, they are seeking students like you.

Although you are still a student, you have acquired knowledge and skills that make you invaluable. Your discipline is especially important due to the effects of this particular virus. You can make important contributions to a health care team.

The State of Maryland, in consultation with your school's leaders, and the directors of all the respiratory therapy programs in the state, has developed a credentialing process to help identify qualified and interested respiratory therapy students. The on-line procedure is quick and easy for you to complete. When you are done, it will provide you with a credential as "Clinical Extern / RESP," which will be recognizable to potential employers and others in the health care system. Your profile information will be made available to a statewide agency that is coordinating clinical staffing resources and to hospitals seeking to hire respiratory therapy students to assist during the pandemic.

What You Can Do:

- Go to [www.miemsslicense.com](http://www.miemsslicense.com) or [www.MIEMSS.org](http://www.MIEMSS.org).
- Create an account (takes only a minute).
- Starting April 7, use your account log-in to apply to be a "Clinical Extern / RESP".
- Follow the instructions to complete a FERPA Student Information Release (so MIEMSS can validate your student status with your school).

What Will Happen Next:

- MIEMSS will validate your status with your school (some schools have already provided the needed information).
- After your information is reviewed, you will receive a certificate.
- Your information will be shared with potential employers (Maryland Department of Health and Maryland hospitals).

And then...

- You may hear from potential employers for you to consider.
- You are under absolutely no obligation, whatsoever; you decide what's right for you.
- In all cases, if you choose to accept a position, you should expect to be part of a team that is supervised by a licensed respiratory therapist, where you have access to any needed

equipment, and where the expectations of you are commensurate with your level of education and experience.

Clinical Extern / RESP's will be categorized in two levels to help distinguish knowledge, clinical experiences, and relevant skills. The directors of all Maryland's respiratory therapy programs have helped to decide what those levels are. Unfortunately, not every respiratory therapy student will qualify to be a Clinical Extern, as some have not yet had the opportunity get important clinical experiences. However, there are numerous opportunities to volunteer and work with hospital employment services in other supportive ways.

There will be other Clinical Externs, including, for example, medical students and nursing students. Together, you represent an important part of the promise that our health care system will rise to the challenges in the weeks and months ahead.

I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity. Again, becoming a Clinical Extern does not obligate you in any way. It merely sets the stage for you to consider options to help during this crisis, as those options are presented to you.

If you have questions, please contact either Barb Goff [bgoff@miemss.org](mailto:bgoff@miemss.org) or Terrell Buckson [tbuckson@miemss.org](mailto:tbuckson@miemss.org). If they can't answer your question, they'll find someone who can!

In closing, thank you for your indulgence and consideration. Congratulations on choosing a career path that places you at the forefront of innovative knowledge and technology to heal people at their time of greatest need. I wish you well as your educational journey continues beyond the current crisis.

With greatest respect,



Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH, FACEP