
PIPS - Partners Office for International Professionals and Students

Memorandum

To: Hospital Staff

From: Noel Palatas, Manager

April 02, 2020

Immigration Impacts of COVID-19

****The following guidance and travel restrictions are subject to change.****

Maintaining Visa status

- If you and/or your family members in J status have contracted or are suspected to have contracted COVID-19, please reach out to our office.
- If your visa sponsorship is ending and you or your family members are unable to leave because of travel restrictions or flight availability, please reach out to our office at pips@partners.org so our team can provide support.
- For J-1 or H-1B visa holders who plan to permanently depart the U.S., please have your department submit a departure request to us.
- For J-1 Exchange Visitors who need to temporarily leave the U.S., please ask your department to confirm that this is possible with regards to your training and/or research objectives. Your department can submit a [Travel Request](#) to PIPS.
- If you or your department has not yet contacted PIPS with your new work-from-home address, you can e-mail pips@partners.org.

Please remember that if you are continuing to work on grant-funded research from home, you should be tracking your grant-related activities. Contact your PI if you have questions about this step.

Government Updates:

The U.S. Department of State is suspending routine visa services in most countries worldwide. Embassies and consulates in these countries will cancel all routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments as of March 18, 2020. These embassies and consulates will resume routine visa services as soon as possible, but we are unable to provide a specific date at this time.

USCIS Office Closures:

As of March 25, 2020, USCIS has suspended routine in-person services until at least April 7, 2020. Upcoming green card interviews and biometrics appointments (required for H-4 change of status or extensions) scheduled for this time period will be postponed.

Travel Restrictions to Canada:

On March 20, 2020 the U.S. and Canadian governments issued a joint statement restricting travel between the two countries excluding essential travel until April 20, 2020. Examples of essential travel include:

- U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents returning to the United States;
- Individuals traveling for medical purposes (e.g. to receive medical treatment);
- Individuals traveling to attend educational institutions;
- Individuals traveling for emergency response and public health purposes;
- Individuals engaged in lawful cross-border trade;
- Individuals engaged in official government travel or diplomatic travel;
- Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and immediately family members; and
- Individuals engaged in military-related travel operations.

Travel Restrictions for foreign nationals entering from Europe:

On March 11, 2020, President Donald Trump announced a 30-day restriction on travel to the United States from Europe effective Friday, March 13, 2020. The restrictions apply to foreign nationals who have been physically present in the Schengen Area of Europe during the 14-day period preceding an attempted entry into the U.S.

- The European Schengen area includes: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein,

Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

- U.S. Citizens and permanent residents (green card holders) are exempt from the travel restrictions.

On March 14, 2020, President Trump further expanded the European travel restrictions to include travel from Ireland and the U.K., effective March 16, 2020.

Travel Restrictions for Foreign Nationals Entering from China:

On Friday, January 31, 2020, President Trump signed a proclamation suspending entry into the United States of foreign nationals who were physically present in the People's Republic of China, excluding the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau, within the 14 days preceding an attempted entry into the U.S.

For New J-1 Exchange Visitors:

All new J-1 exchange visitors who have not yet entered the U.S. to start their J-1 program should remain outside the U.S. until May 14, 2020 or later. All research facilities at Partners (MGH, BWH, MEE, Spaulding, McLean) are closed and may remain closed for the next several weeks. Please re-confirm your start date with your department before entering the U.S.

Continued Operations at PIPS:

Advisors are still processing H-1B cases and J-1 renewal requests; we have adjusted our work flow to ensure employees do not fall out of status.

To reach an advisor with questions about travel or your visa status, please email pips@partners.org.