COVID-19 Travel Considerations as of 10/15/2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, remember to regularly check for updates to Mount Sinai’s Travel Policy, which includes guidelines for work-related travel and personal travel.

Safety measures and regulations implemented in response to COVID-19 vary not only by country, but regionally within the United States. If you must travel, we ask that you keep in mind the following travel risks before and after traveling:

Pre-Travel
• **Research state and country-specific entry and exit requirements**, such as mandatory 14-day quarantine upon arrival, COVID-19 testing requirements, health screenings at airports and other transit points, etc. (i.e. www.kayak.com/travel-restrictions, www.nga.org/coronavirus/#glance, etc.)
• **Health self-assessment**: evaluating one’s personal health risks, e.g., pre-existing conditions, age, etc.
• **Purchase** medical evacuation insurance and travel health insurance before you depart on personal travel (i.e. www.insuremytrip.com, www.squaremouth.com, etc.)
• **Carefully read** all insurance policies to make sure they cover what you need them to cover. Some travel insurance companies explicitly state that epidemics and pandemics are excluded reasons for canceling a trip.
• **Develop a personal emergency plan** ahead of departure with a list of reputable medical facilities equipped to treat COVID-19 near your lodging, local emergency contact information, etc. (contact International SOS at +1 215-942-8226 for advice)
• **Be aware of societal restrictions and local laws** in place regarding physical distancing measures, mask requirements, in-country movement restrictions, etc.
• **Be alert to local safety and security risks**, including public demonstrations against government responses to COVID-19 and xenophobia towards international travelers
• **Transportation and Lodging**: when making reservations be sure to inquire about safety measures (e.g. physical distancing, hygiene) hotels are taking in light of COVID-19; and confirm availability of Ub-ers/Lyfts, local taxi services, and access to public transportation
• **Create a COVID-19-specific packing list**, including masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, wipes, etc.
• **Reflect upon ethical implications of traveling**, taking into consideration not only possible exposure to oneself, but the likelihood of exposing communities whose local health system may not have appropriate infrastructure to adequately respond to COVID-19
• **Make sure your passport will be valid for at least six months** after you return home and it has two or more blank pages.
• If an American citizen, register your trip on the State Department’s STEP. (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program). If not, register with your home country’s equivalent service, if one exists.

Post-Travel
• Health self-assessment: consider contacting EHS or your personal physician for advice on how to best monitor oneself for symptoms, such as completing a screening questionnaire, conducting routine temperature checks, downloading a symptom tracking app onto your smartphone, etc.

• If returning from a country that has experienced a significant COVID-19 outbreak, consider applying physical distancing measures, i.e. self-isolating for 14 days upon return, getting tested for COVID-19, etc. Employees will be required to use PTO days if quarantine is necessary and working remotely is not possible.

For visa holders:
• Due to the fluidity of this situation, we ask that visa holders contact International Personnel (212-241-8300) for updated travel restrictions prior to making international travel arrangements.

• U.S. consulates and embassies have suspended routine visa services and are granting discretionary appointments based on individual circumstances.

• Keep in mind that as countries continue to restrict inbound and outbound travel, you can even be denied from returning to the U.S., despite having an airline ticket.

Lastly, we recommend viewing the following resources as you prepare for travel:
• Review International SOS’ Membership Portal Page to look up global alerts, sign up for personal coverage, and build your own Country Reports

• Visit International SOS’ COVID-19 Website where you may access all articles under the Public Access and Members Access sections.

• Contact International SOS (+1 215-942-8226) for country-specific advice related to COVID-19 concerns before, during, or after travel.

• Monitor travel advisories, health notices, and situation reports from the State Department, Center for Disease Control, and World Health Organization, respectively.