



The upcoming MSIS Annual meeting is in a hybrid format, with both virtual and in-person attendees. This will be the first in-person meeting in a long time for many of us, and we are looking forward to the opportunity to meet and socialize with our colleagues.

Because COVID cases and subsequent hospitalizations for severe disease are increasing dramatically in many parts of the US as well as in other parts of the world, the MSIS Board has thought carefully about how best to ensure a safe and successful meeting in the current environment. The Delta variant, which has rapidly become the dominant variant in the US, is known to be more transmissible than previous variants. Although fully vaccinated individuals are still thought to be protected from severe disease, breakthrough infections are occurring and there are many unknowns regarding the involvement of vaccinated individuals in transmission chains, as well as the potential for development of prolonged complications from infection (ie 'long COVID'). Our expectation is that meeting attendees are fully vaccinated; however, some may be unvaccinated while others may be immunocompromised, have unvaccinated children or high-risk family members, or manage immunocompromised patients in their daily jobs.

Given that the MSIS is a society focused on infectious diseases, it is important that we set an example for safety protocols at the in-person component of our hybrid meeting, and take all reasonable precautions to prevent spread of COVID at our meeting. Therefore, the following be set forth as an operational COVID safety protocol at the 2021 Annual Meeting:

1. Set the expectation that *all meeting attendees will wear a mask in indoor spaces* during the meeting. Ear-loop medical-grade masks will be available for all attendees at the entrance to the meeting. Speakers can remove their mask when speaking, since there will be significant distance between the speaker and attendees.
2. Request a conference set-up to *allow for adequate distancing between attendees*. The conference room is a large room designed to accommodate many more people than will be in attendance. This will allow for a seating arrangement to facilitate social distancing.
3. Provide meals in an outdoor setting, or provide the option to go to an outdoor area to eat, when possible.
4. Provide alcohol hand gel dispensers at the meeting to make hand hygiene opportunities abundant.

As a society it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to create a safe environment for our colleagues at the Annual Meeting so they will feel comfortable attending. We all look forward to a return to normalcy when it is safe to do so, but given the current circumstances we need to continue to be cautious so we can all enjoy the meeting.