

## Commandant Maj. Gen. Maranian leads 2nd virtual townhall

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 14 September 2020



*Maj. Gen. Steve Maranian was joined by Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Courtney Short and Dunham Army Health Clinic Commander Lt. Col. Jennifer Saenz for the live forum on Facebook on September 10.*

USAWC Commandant Maj. Gen. Steve Maranian began his second virtual townhall by laying out the meeting’s purpose—to keep the lines of communication open. In this “periodic touchpoint,” he offered his current assessment of community COVID conditions, anticipated near-future conditions, and addressed the concerns that have been raised by community members. “Trust the polices we have put in place,” he said. “They’re working.”

Maranian was joined by Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Courtney Short and Dunham Army Health Clinic Commander Lt. Col. Jennifer Saenz for the live forum on [www.facebook.com/usawc](https://www.facebook.com/usawc), September 10.

[Scroll to find Dunham Army Health Clinic update on tests, contact tracing, and services, and Garrison operations]

“In the last townhall, we went through a number of different policies we implemented, designed to keep our students, faculty and staff safe, to really to safeguard the community as a whole ... but, also to preserve, to the greatest degree the possible, our ability to do in-person classes... I can tell you we’ve had zero seminars directly affected by COVID to date and so we’re going to continue to sustain what we’re doing.

“Is that the optimal condition? Of course it isn’t, but nothing with COVID in 2020 is optimal. But the gold standard for resident learning as face-to-face. And therefore, our policies are designed to minimize the COVID impact within the community and keep the bubbles that we’ve created within our seminars ... and, it’s working.

“We’re seeing some very small number of COVID cases. That is probably not a secret. As you know, Army policy dictates that we’re not allowed to share a lot of details in that regard, but it is very small... It’s not unexpected given the fact that were in a community that had a fairly low but consistent rate of infections as you look at the surrounding area around Carlisle... There are those people who are adamant, for ideological or political reasons, that mask wearing and following the CDC protocols aren’t something they want to do. We don’t have that problem here in the military community.

“We know that the policy is prescriptive for all service members and we trust service members to do the right thing. Our systems, the policies we have put in place, have proven themselves out. The contact tracing and the cleaning that we’ve done behind the few cases have been very effective.”

“In-person class, with a blended modality, will continue, given no drastic changes in the pandemic, through the Thanksgiving holiday,” said Maranian.

“Virtual class will resume January 3rd for two weeks, to re-establish the bubble and to conduct additional surveillance testing on students and faculty. Restriction-of-Movement, ROM, guidance will be issued on a case-by-case basis after the holiday.

*Where we are today*

“We found [that] a careful balance between business as usual and COVID health precautions is working for us. But let me be clear, we can’t relax and we can’t let our guard down. Complacency will bite us and very quickly a case or two could turn into a larger outbreak. That would be impactful not

only to the students and faculty trying to do training in-person but the community at large.

There is encouraging news coming out of the operation Warp Speed which you know Gen. Gus Perna is co-charging. And it's too soon to be able to know for sure, but there's promising news with regards to ... potential vaccines and therapeutics.

"At the same time ..., you can't turn on the computer or the TV without seeing images of people gathering at beaches and at parties celebrating the holidays. I would be lying if I didn't say my antenna aren't up a little bit looking at where we are, following the Labor Day holiday. We will see where we are in a couple of weeks based on our travel and visitors...

"...[W]hile we're all tired of this and that is understandable-- while we're all a bit frustrated ... let's not get complacent and let our guard down. We all have an individual responsibility to keep the community safe," said Maranian.

In-person class, with a blended modality, will continue, given no drastic changes in the pandemic, through the Thanksgiving holiday

Virtual class will resume after the New Year, January 3rd for two weeks, to re-establish the bubble and to conduct additional surveillance testing on students and faculty. A ROM will be issued on a case-by-case basis after the holiday.

### *Health Policies and Personnel Responsibilities*

- Carlisle Barracks remains at Health Protection Condition Charlie, which allows the installation to control the flow of visitors. Screening is highly encouraged for relatives, coming from outside the 150-mile radius and staying on base during the holiday season.
- Masks are still extremely necessary—in class students, may remove their masks while talking, but must put it back on after they are done speaking
- Restriction of movement and quarantining continues to be directed on a case-by-case basis
- Geo-bachelors (and others on a case by case basis) can request that their family home be designated as "place of duty" during the Thanksgiving – Winter holiday period when classes will be remote.
- Treat advice from contact tracers as directive in nature
- If you have concerns about the COVID situation, elevate that through your chain of command (i.e. service member, seminar spouse representative, class president spouse), rather than turning to social media
- When a family member has been exposed but has no symptoms, it is the service member's responsibility to limit contact with the potential carrier.

*Medical updates and services, per Lt. Col. Jennifer Saenz -*

- COVID tracing continues to be very effective
- Basic screening and tracking continue to be offered for civilian students and faculty
- To move from Charlie to Bravo, case rates must decrease over a 14-day period
- Flu shot plan will be released when vaccines are received, later this Fall. In the meantime, TRICARE beneficiaries can go to any participating pharmacy location and get the vaccine for free; just show your ID.
- When renovations begin at the Exchange, the PX pharmacy operations will move to Dunham main clinic.