The COVID19 Student Service Corp (CSSC) was established at Columbia University to address the unmet needs of the healthcare system, patients, providers, and community during the COVID19 pandemic.

In early March, as the case load started to rise in New York, it became apparent that the medical curriculum at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons’ (VP&S) was going to become virtual. As a result, preclinical students would be taking all of their classes online and missing out on in-hospital sessions where they would have otherwise practiced their physical exam, oral presentation, and note writing skills. Furthermore, senior students would have to suspend their clinical work and find other meaningful learning experiences. The CSSC saw this as an opportunity for the senior students to support the preclinical curriculum as it transitioned to a virtual medium and to engage in service learning by teaching clinical knowledge and skills to the preclinical students.

The senior students engaged in various teaching activities that supported or supplemented the preclinical curriculum (listed below):

1. Senior students served as TAs in each of the preclinical courses. This service was critical, as the faculty were taken away from teaching roles by their growing clinical responsibilities. These TAs supported and often times lead small and large group sessions that included case-based learning, standardized patient interviews, and oral presentation and note-writing practice. They also helped run a virtual OSCE for the entire M1 class and further supplemented the curriculum by providing in-depth answer explanations for problem sets and practice problems.

2. Senior students provided individualized instruction for clinical knowledge and skills. The senior student TAs that helped run our organ-system-based pathophysiology course held virtual office hours where they provided one-on-one tutoring to preclinical students who had questions about the course material. Furthermore, senior students held one-on-one virtual physical exam workshops with preclinical students where they helped them improve their skills and learn to implement them in case-based scenarios.

3. Senior students provided Step 1 studying support to the M2s, who are taking this time off from clinical work to study for Step 1.

This project has engaged >50 senior students (M2s, M3s, and M4s) in >50 small and large group learning lessons and >100 hours of individualized instruction.