

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

March 30, 2020

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

COVID hotline opens for School of Medicine and BJC HealthCare employees

Beginning today, March 30, all employees of Washington University and BJC HealthCare will be able to call a hotline for concerns regarding COVID-19 exposure or illness: 314-362-5056 or 314-362-5050. If you feel sick, don't come to work. Call the hotline.

Call center staff will evaluate employees who have developed symptoms associated with COVID-19 and can arrange for testing when indicated. All employees working in a WashU or BJC clinical or research environment will be evaluated for testing through the COVID employee hotline if symptoms occur, regardless of mechanism of exposure. Note: Testing is not recommended for asymptomatic individuals.

Occupational Health nurses will still actively reach out to employees identified as potentially exposed to a patient or colleague diagnosed with COVID-19 to discuss their exposure risk and any special precautions they need to take at work.

Testing is available on the Washington University/ BJH/ SLCH campus by appointment through one of the above mechanisms only. Additional public testing sites are also available and new employee-only testing sites are in development.

School of Medicine launches COVID-19 website

The School of Medicine has launched a website to make it easier for the Medical Campus community to find COVID-19 information, including procedures and updates pertaining specifically to our campus. This website is a central resource for School of Medicine faculty, students, trainees and staff.

Visit the site at coronavirus.med.wustl.edu. University updates can still be found at coronavirus.wustl.edu.

Updated PPE requirements and recommendations

Please review these [Updated Requirements and Recommendations on PPE for COVID-19](#). This document revises and clarifies several situations. The language “tier” has been changed to “category” and fit testing of N95 or alternates has been waived as part of this crisis situation.

Medical students make, deliver face shields



Some 50 third-year WashU medical students came together to make face shields for frontline health-care workers on the Medical Campus treating patients with COVID-19. The students, whose clerkships were postponed due to the pandemic, sought to contribute to the COVID response in a meaningful way by addressing an expected shortage of PPE. They assembled about 1,650 face shields, and their design was created with input from Washington University infectious diseases specialists. The eight students who spearheaded the project are, from left to right: Jesse Hu, Avira Som, Kevin Chen, Sajal Tiwary, Jerry Fong, Cathy Yu, Chase Renfroe and Katie Jordan.

Supply and process update for COVID-19 testing

To perform COVID-19 testing requires the equipment/machinery, nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs and reagent. Currently, the hospital has the equipment, an adequate supply of NP swabs and laboratory reagents for the number of tests ordered. The lab is capable of running approximately 200 tests per day and is hopeful that, within the next week, it will be able to increase testing capacity by 50%. Priority is given to testing samples from symptomatic inpatients and symptomatic health-care workers. The lab is also looking into options to send out testing.

Two companies, Cepheid Inc. and BioFire Diagnostics, have developed rapid turnaround assay reagents that have been approved by the FDA under “emergency use authorization.” While the lab has the instrumentation and expertise to perform these tests, at this time, the St. Louis metropolitan area is not considered a hot spot by the federal government, which means the hospital is not eligible to receive these test kits.

Updates will be shared as the situation changes.

Seal ziplock bags

Please ensure ziplock bags are completely sealed before sending samples in the pneumatic tube system or in the courier pick-up boxes.

Questions about lab results

Please do not call the lab for COVID-19 results. Additional calls take lab personnel away from running tests. Results will be visible in EPIC as soon as complete. Results are available 24-48 hours post receipt.

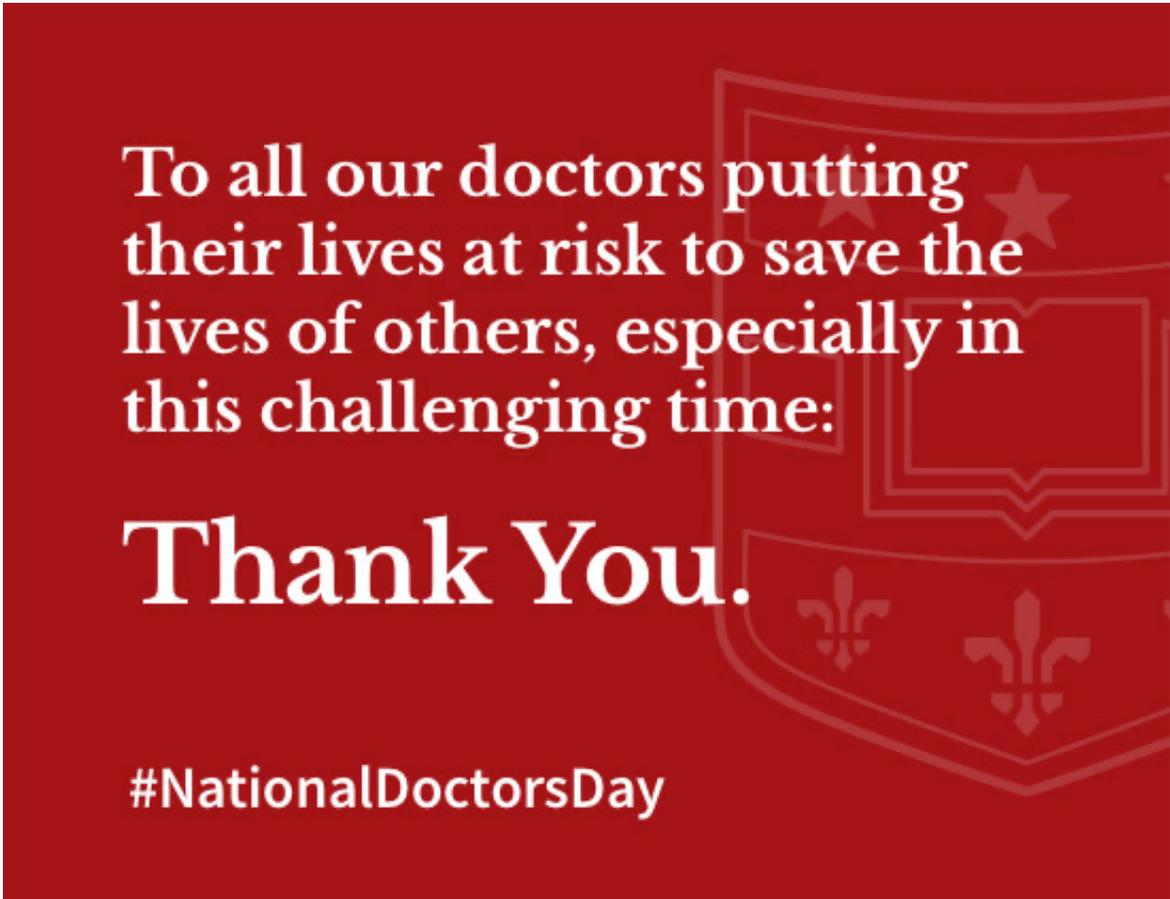
Supercomputing project sets sights on coronavirus

One of the [largest crowdsourced supercomputing projects in the world](#) is taking aim at the virus COVID-19. Led by computational biophysicist Greg Bowman, at the School of Medicine, the project is called Folding@home. The project relies on the collective power of volunteers’ home computers to perform the complex calculations required to simulate protein dynamics. Since announcing in late February the project’s new focus on coronavirus, the number of Folding@home volunteers has skyrocketed, with some 400,000-plus new folders joining the effort,

using more than 1 million devices.

Why 'death rates' from coronavirus can be deceiving

“Case fatality rates have been very confusing,” [Dr. Steven Lawrence](#), an infectious disease expert and associate professor of medicine at the School of Medicine, told NPR. “The numbers may look different even if the actual situation is the same.”



To all our doctors putting
their lives at risk to save the
lives of others, especially in
this challenging time:

Thank You.

#NationalDoctorsDay

For Medical Campus updates, visit coronavirus.med.wustl.edu »

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