



Dear Medical Campus Community,

We are sending this communication to provide important updates and explain the current guidance regarding the rapidly evolving novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak.

### **Situation Update as of February 3, 2020**

Since the first reports of illnesses in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, and the identification of the novel coronavirus as the cause, the number of confirmed cases has rapidly increased and now exceeds 17,000 worldwide. While additional clinical data are needed, most patients infected with novel coronavirus appear to have mild illnesses, though severe illnesses and deaths have been reported. Over 95% of cases have originated in mainland China, but at least 23 countries have reported imported cases, including 11 in the U.S. to date. Person-to-person transmission has been confirmed, however sustained transmission in countries outside of China has not yet been reported. Many experts believe that prompt, carefully coordinated public health and infection prevention measures (isolation of cases, use of masks, hand washing and hand hygiene), might still be able to prevent global spread, just as SARS was controlled in 2003 even without an effective vaccine or antiviral drugs. Washington University programs to protect faculty, staff and students from novel coronavirus are in alignment with federal and state guidance.

### **Local Risk Assessment**

There are currently no suspected or confirmed cases of novel coronavirus on any of our University campuses or in affiliated hospitals. The individual risk of acquiring the novel coronavirus is currently very low in the St. Louis Metropolitan area and our community. We are near the peak of cold and flu season. The presence of fever and respiratory symptoms is common this time of year and can be assumed to be due to routine cold and flu causes unless there has been recent travel to an area of sustained novel coronavirus transmission (currently only mainland China) or direct contact with someone known to have novel coronavirus infection. During cold and flu season, it is common to see people wearing masks. Please be assured that seeing someone wearing a mask does not mean that they are under investigation for novel coronavirus. It also is important to note that the risk of novel coronavirus infection is based on exposure through travel or contact with a known case, and not on race or ethnicity.

### **Washington University Response**

Washington University has been closely monitoring the novel coronavirus epidemic since its emergence last month. Leaders from Emergency Management, Student and Occupational Health, Infectious Disease and Public Affairs from the School of Medicine and Danforth campuses have been in regular communication and coordinating response activities with our Barnes-Jewish Hospital and BJC Healthcare partners. The novel coronavirus situation continues to evolve as new areas of the world are affected and as we learn more about the virus. Up-to-date information, including specific guidance for students, faculty and staff, and links to reliable external sources of information including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), can be found at <https://emergency.wustl.edu>. Important updates or changes in guidance will be sent by e-mail in addition to updating this website.

### **Specific Medical School Guidance**

1. All School of Medicine students, staff and faculty. Please carefully read all University communications and be prepared to follow specific guidance as it arises.
2. School of Medicine students, staff, and faculty who have been in mainland China in the past 14 days or who have had direct contact with a patient with confirmed novel coronavirus in the past 14 days should follow the guidance below.
  - A) Students must notify Student Health at 314-362-3523 prior to returning to campus to discuss what precautions must be taken for your specific situation.
  - B) Staff and faculty must notify Occupational Health at 314-362-3528 prior to returning to work to discuss what precautions must be taken for your specific situation.
  - C) Students, staff and faculty should take their temperature at least twice a day and monitor themselves for symptoms of novel coronavirus infection (feeling feverish or having a temperature greater than 38.0° C / 100.4° F, cough, and shortness of breath). Symptoms should be monitored for at least 14 days after returning from China.
  - D) If any of these symptoms develop, students must contact Student Health at 314-362-3523 and staff and faculty must contact Occupational Health at 314-362-3528 immediately. If symptoms develop after hours contact the Barnes-Jewish Hospital Emergency Department at 314-362-9104, for directions on how to be safely evaluated for novel coronavirus infection.
3. Leaders, directors, managers and supervisors. Please ensure that all students, staff or faculty you supervise who have been in mainland China in the past 14 days are aware of and have adhered to the requirement to notify Student or Occupational Health prior to returning to school or work.

Students, staff and faculty who meet criteria for possible exposure to novel coronavirus (having been in mainland China in the past 14 days, or having direct contact with a patient known to have novel coronavirus infection) will be interviewed by Student or Occupational Health personnel to determine if the travel and exposure history constitute a risk for contracting novel coronavirus. Student or Occupational Health will assess whether the student, staff or faculty member can safely return to school or work and managers will be notified of the results of the assessment. Out of an abundance of caution to protect the health of our community, those who are deemed safe to work but have had a potential exposure to novel coronavirus will be required to wear a surgical or isolation mask (i.e. not an N95 respirator) while at work or work from home (if their manager approves) until the 14-day period has ended. This guidance may change as we learn more about the novel coronavirus so it will be important to watch for University updates.

For additional information, see <https://emergency.wustl.edu>, or call Student Health at 314-362-3523 or Occupational Health at 314-362-3528.