

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

April 16, 2020

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

84 inpatients confirmed positive **34** admitted, awaiting test results

Masks provided for faculty, staff and students to take home



The CDC recently recommended that everyone wear a cotton mask when out in public – however, with continued shortages, finding a mask has been a challenge

for many.

To help you with this, the School of Medicine is providing a set of washable, cotton-poly masks for medical school faculty, staff and trainees, upon request. This is a small gesture, but please realize that we are thinking of all of you, and hope that you, your family and your neighbors continue to be safe and healthy during this pandemic. We are all committed to slowing the spread of COVID-19, and keeping our WUSM people and our communities safe.

Those working on the Medical Campus will receive masks via a pickup location or through their department. For those who are not coming to campus at present, we will try to deliver to your home. Please note that these masks are not medical grade, but they are appropriate for when you are out in public, such as at the grocery store. If you would like a set of masks, please [fill out this form](#).

“Thank you for making sacrifices to help take care of us”



WashU med students from the classes of 2020-23 banded together to produce a [video thanking health-care workers and other essential employees on the Medical Campus](#).

What does "exposure" mean?

An exposure is defined as:

- Close contact* with an infected, unmasked source patient while not wearing appropriate PPE, including an isolation mask or N95 respirator/PAPR/CAPR, goggles or face shield, gloves and gown within 48 hours before the onset of the patient's symptoms, or
- Close contact* with an infected source employee who is not wearing appropriate PPE, including an isolation mask, within 48 hours of employee's symptom onset. If either the source employee or the colleague is wearing a mask this interaction is considered low risk.

**Close contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period (e.g., 15 minutes) OR having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case. For example, being coughed on.*

Is it still important to practice social distancing when in the building?

Yes. Whenever possible, and when not providing direct patient care, try to keep a distance of 6 feet between yourself and co-workers in huddles, break rooms and throughout your day. [Click here for a social distancing flyer.](#)

N95 sterilization process expanded

To support our extended-wear policy for N95 masks, the Medical Campus is disinfecting masks and returning them to their original wearer on selected nursing units and departments. A team from BJC and Washington University is disinfecting the masks using vaporized hydrogen peroxide. We're disinfecting up to 200 masks per day, including several masks from other BJC hospitals, with the capacity to do more as the need arises.

Collection bins are in participating units and staff members (including physicians) can place their masks in the bin using [these instructions](#). Staff members should not turn in a mask they will need the following day.

Download some [frequently asked questions](#) about this process. Conservation

strategies and [re-use procedures](#) for N95 masks have not changed. For more information, contact Andrew Pierce, director of Barnes-Jewish Hospital Supply Plus & Perioperative Business at andrew.pierce@bjc.org.

Alternative care site opens in hotel

The region's first alternate care site opened April 15, and took its first BJC patients – from Christian Hospital. The alternate care site, established in north St. Louis County at the Quality Inn on Dunn Road, is a safe place to recover for patients who no longer need to be hospitalized, without going home where loved ones could still be at risk of exposure. Hospital case managers and social workers will work with patients who need this resource during discharge planning. A [clinician handoff document](#) and [patient information sheet](#) are available.

Doctor on front line of St. Louis' fight against coronavirus: 'Don't waste all the effort and pain'

Critical care physician [Tiffany Osborn shared what it's like to work on the front lines during COVID-19 with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#). She explained that Barnes-Jewish Hospital Emergency Department is seeing a high volume of very sick patients, and "every day feels like a week." What gives her hope is a dedicated staff who are committed to patients, and a community that has supported them, with food, appreciation and locally produced gear such as face shields. She also praised the community-wide collaboration, from people embracing the social-distancing mandates to the three major health-care systems working together. "This is the first time I've seen whole health systems come together to work collaboratively to take care of the community," she said. "No matter where you are in the St. Louis community, you're going to get the right care at the right time."

Tracking COVID-19 cases by zip code highlights inequity in St. Louis region



St. Louis on the Air host Sarah Fenske recently [spoke with Laurie Punch, a Washington University trauma surgeon, and Michal Grinstein-Weiss, director of Washington University's Social Policy Institute](#) and of the Centene Center for Health Transformation. Grinstein-Weiss recently looked into COVID-19 case counts in zip codes across the St. Louis region and found higher numbers of cases in poorer and highly segregated areas.

Punch said she thinks the COVID-19 pandemic gives people an opportunity to truly understand the determinants of health. “They (health determinants) are not individual choices or issues of character but rather a reflection of where you work, live, learn and play,” she said. “I think that we have an opportunity as a society globally to embrace that truth and recognize that if we want to have a healthy, intact and well society, we need to make sure that people have equitable access to those things in an environment that promote health.”

Important numbers and links

- Call the BJC/WUSM employee hotline for COVID-19 exposure or illness: 314-362-5056
- Use this [online screening tool](#) before reporting to work
- Review [inpatient protocol](#)

- Review [ambulatory_protocol](#)
- Call the Coping with COVID hotline for in-the-moment emotional support:
314-286-1700
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program for 24/7 work-life support: 844-365-4587
- Email inspirational stories to heroes@wustl.edu

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

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