

## WashU Med COVID-19 Update

July 9, 2020

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

### Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

**33** inpatients confirmed positive      **26** admitted, awaiting test results

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### N95 respirator decontamination process discontinued

On Friday, July 10, the N95 decontamination process will be discontinued on the Medical Campus. FDA guidelines released in early June significantly limited the types of N95 respirators appropriate for vaporized hydrogen peroxide (VHP) disinfection. As a result, utilization has been extremely low.



Current N95 conservation guidelines will remain in place until supply catches up to demand. N95 users should continue to store issued N95s in a paper bag marked with name and date of first use. N95s can be worn for up to five shifts, if established discard criteria are not met first. Proper hand hygiene and user seal checks remain critical steps to ensure staff safety. The VHP disinfection process may be reinstated on short notice if the need arises.

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### Missouri inks contract with Washington University to assist on virus tracking



For four months, infectious disease experts at Washington University School of Medicine assisted Missouri officials in analyzing the spread of the coronavirus. The state now is going to pay for the service, according to a [recent Post-Dispatch article](#). A contract signed June 19 says that the state will pay the School of Medicine's infectious disease division \$129,000 through the end of the year for data analysis, modeling and research capabilities related to COVID-19. Elvin Geng, MD, professor of medicine, will lead the project.

The contract calls for Geng and his team to provide projections on the disease and ongoing analysis to identify emerging hot spots.

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## **Study to examine social media's effects on stress during pandemic**



The impact of social media on anxiety and stress during the coronavirus pandemic is the focus of a [new study led by mental health experts at Washington University](#) and computer scientists at Georgia Tech. The National Science Foundation is funding the pilot study.

“As we continue to stay home as much as possible and remain physically distant from one another, many people rely on social media to stay connected,” said co-principal investigator Patricia A. Cavazos-Rehg, PhD, professor of psychiatry at Washington University. “But much of what is on social media is anxiety-provoking. There’s also misinformation on social media, and that is problematic, too.”

The researchers plan to use computer algorithms to identify stressors — such as anxiety-provoking messages or messages containing misinformation — linked to the pandemic. They also plan to design their own messages that can be delivered over social media platforms to help relieve downturns in psychological well-being.

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## **Safeguarding mental health as pandemic becomes 'a really long haul'**

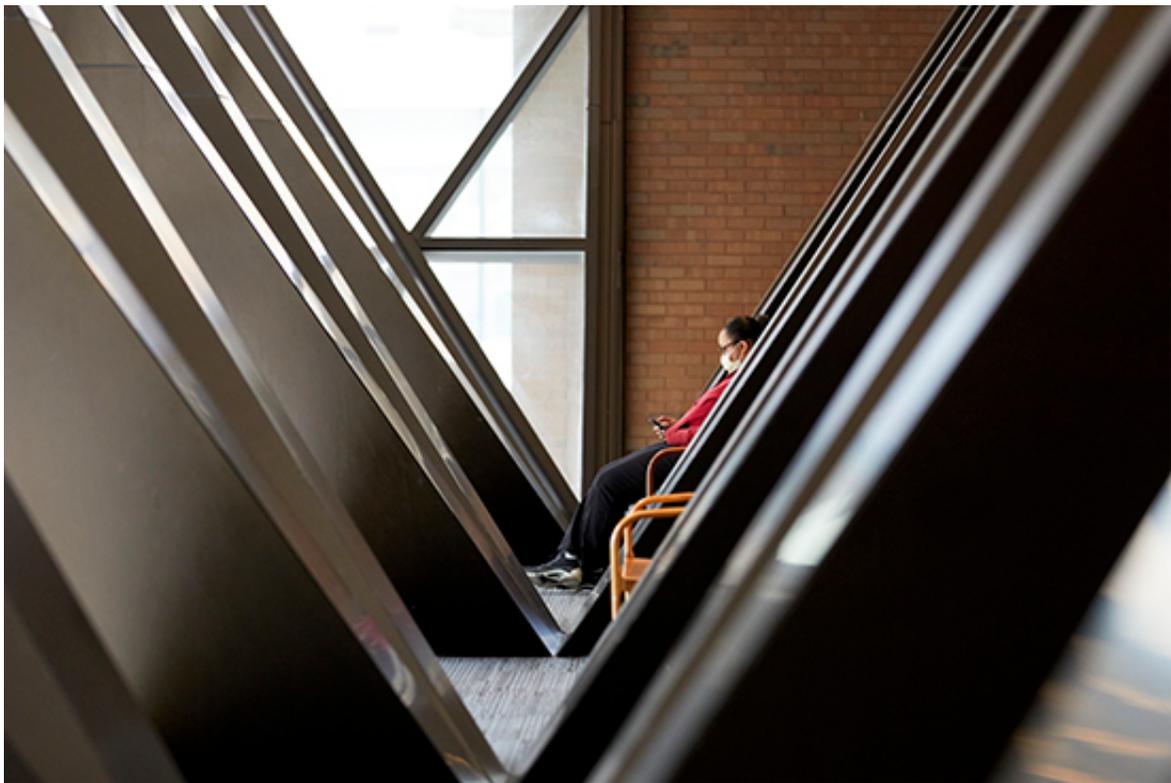
Washington University psychiatrist Jessi Gold, MD, [offered strategies on how to safeguard your](#)

[mental health as you go about living life in a COVID-19 world](#) during a recent St. Louis on the Air episode. One of the most common challenges right now, Gold said, is accepting a new normal and finding ways to live well within a lengthening period of uncertainty.



She noted that some people may also be beating themselves up for enjoying parts of this new age. “Joy, or enjoyment, is an OK feeling,” Gold said. “I think that it’s hard when the world is really hard and other people are struggling, that we can feel any sort of enjoyment. You know, if it’s your birthday and you had an OK day, you’re allowed to still have had a good birthday. It’s OK that that happens even though there are people dying and there’s racism and the world is hard.

“And if we go through every day and all we think about is the negatives, it’ll be really hard to get through this. Because there are a lot of very hard things.”



A quiet moment for a Barnes-Jewish employee in the Clinical Sciences Research Building.

## 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
- Know your [screening stations](#)
- Review [inpatient protocol](#)
- Review [ambulatory protocol](#)
- Call the Well-Being Line 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](mailto:heroes@wustl.edu)

For Medical Campus updates, visit [coronavirus.med.wustl.edu](https://coronavirus.med.wustl.edu) »

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