

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

July 20, 2020

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

43 inpatients confirmed positive **25** admitted, awaiting test results

Keep following best practices: They work



With COVID-19 increasing in the community, it is more important than ever to keep safety in mind not just at work, but in our everyday activities as well. Key tips to follow include:

- Avoid crowded places where it is difficult to maintain physical distancing, such as bars.
- Wear a mask all the time in the community.
- In addition to your mask, practice physical distancing in public areas such as grocery markets, retail stores, places of worship and when using public

transportation.

- At home, separate yourself as much as possible from family members who may have symptoms.
- Continue frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer, including every time you return to your car, come home from being out, and after leaving stores, pumping gas, etc.

WUSM scientists create a safer version of virus to speed research



Paul Rothlauf, a visiting scientist at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, works with a lab-made virus that infects cells and interacts with antibodies just like the COVID-19 virus, but lacks the ability to cause severe disease. This safer virus makes it possible for scientists who do not have access to high-level biosafety facilities to join the effort to find drugs or vaccines for COVID-19.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is so dangerous that scientists studying it must wear full-body biohazard suits with pressurized respirators inside high-level biosafety labs.

But scientists at Washington University School of Medicine have developed a defanged virus that acts like SARS-CoV-2, but that can be handled under ordinary lab safety conditions, according to a study published online in [Cell Host & Microbe](#). This can allow for faster development of drugs and vaccines.

“I’ve never had this many requests for a scientific material in such a short period of time,” said co-senior author Sean Whelan, PhD. “Even before we published, people heard that we were working on this and started requesting the material.”

Doctors treat pregnant Children’s nurse practitioner



A [front-page story](#) in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch yesterday detailed the harrowing journey of St. Louis Children’s Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit nurse practitioner Mallory Goepel when she and her family were diagnosed with COVID-19 in June. Goebel, 32 weeks pregnant with her third child, was admitted to Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Her care team couldn’t try typical COVID-19 treatments because of her pregnancy. Eventually, Goepel needed to be placed on a ventilator, and her daughter, Demi, was delivered via cesarean section six weeks premature.

“She really just couldn’t get over the hump until we did the delivery,” said Jennifer Alexander-Brett, MD, Goepel’s physician and assistant professor in the division of pulmonary and critical care medicine. “Once we did, we were able to aggressively manage (the disease) and get her turned around.”

The story has a happy ending — Mallory and Demi rejoined the family July 16, and everyone is doing well.

Hair stylists' masks likely prevented spread of COVID-19 to clients



Routine mask wearing in a Missouri hair salon likely prevented the spread of COVID-19 from two hair stylists to nearly 140 clients, according to a recent report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#). The report's first author is Michael J. Hendrix, MD, an instructor of medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases.

In May, the two stylists worked in a hair salon in Springfield, Mo., while they experienced symptoms of COVID-19. They later tested positive but before receiving test results, the stylists continued to work while wearing face coverings. Their clients wore face masks, too, in accordance with local policy. Those exposed to the stylists were told to self-quarantine for 14 days and were monitored for symptoms. None reported symptoms. Free COVID-19 testing also was offered to the clients, and of the 67 clients who were tested, all were negative.

The results of the study can be used to inform public health policy during the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors write. "A policy mandating the use of face coverings was likely a contributing factor in preventing transmission of the virus during the interactions between stylists and clients in the hair salon."

Medicaid expansion will give more Missourians access to health care

COVID-19 has put health care top of mind for everyone. Far too many hardworking Missourians who earn less than \$18,000 a year find themselves slipping through the cracks in our health-care system because their jobs don't provide insurance, and they're unable to afford coverage on the open market.



This coverage gap includes parents, thousands of uninsured veterans and those nearing retirement. Passing Medicaid expansion will help to ensure that these Missourians can get health care when they need it. WashU is among the nearly 300 organizations that have endorsed the [Amendment 2 initiative on the Aug. 4 ballot](#). Passing Amendment 2 will also help boost our state's economy and generate additional jobs during our ongoing economic crisis.



BALLOT NOTARIZING AT WUSM

Come have your Aug 4 ballot notarized
July 23-July 31

Bring your mask, ID, pen, & unsigned
ballot to our table in front of **EPNEC**

Find a date/time: bit.ly/wusmnotary

One way to vote safely is to vote by mail. The student group LouHealth can help [by notarizing your ballot](#). Remember: if you want to vote by mail, you must request a mail-in ballot by 5 p.m. Wednesday. Visit the Missouri Secretary of State's office to [request a mail-in ballot](#).

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

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

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