Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

145 inpatients confirmed positive
5 admitted, awaiting test results

WUSM COVID-19 Vaccine Town Hall

Mark your calendar for 1-2 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 9, for a School of Medicine online town hall for faculty, staff and students. This town hall will be focused on COVID-19 vaccines, including discussion about the vaccines’ distribution, safety, effectiveness and more. The session will be recorded for those who aren’t able to attend. Watch your email Friday for a Dean Announce with the Zoom link.
WUSM employee and student coronavirus testing stats now available

WUSM employee and student coronavirus testing stats are now available on the School of Medicine’s coronavirus website. As of Monday, there were 72 active cases among faculty and staff (0.6 percent of all faculty and staff) and two cases among the student population (0.1 percent of all students).

The data includes all testing reported to Occupational Health Services and Student Health Services on the School of Medicine campus — including outside testing, testing performed due to home exposures, and exposures due to social contact. The vast majority of cases are representative of exposures that occurred in social settings off campus. Data will be updated each Monday and Friday. A link to the page will appear at the bottom of each newsletter.

Prevent delays by completing online screening prior to coming to Medical Campus

In addition to masking, washing hands and distancing, we all provide an additional layer of protection for our colleagues, patients and visitors by undergoing the required daily screening process to enter the Medical Campus. Using the WashU COVID-19 screening tool prior to coming to campus helps prevent delays caused when employees must be questioned at the screening stations.

1. Fill out your online assessment daily, no earlier than two hours before your arrival. In the screening tool, you will be asked about COVID-19 symptoms, recent exposures, and any COVID-19 testing results. If you are unable to complete the assessment prior to
2. Present yourself at a campus screening station and maintain social distancing. Screening stations are positioned at major campus entry points. Not all screening stations are open 24 hours. Please use an entrance where a screening station is in operation. Thermal cameras at screening stations now allow for a faster temperature check upon arrival. Show your screening tool result on your device for expedited entry at the screening location. Based on your daily screening tool result and thermal screening clearance, you will be given a color-coded sticker to wear on your badge indicating that you may access campus for a 24-hour period, beginning at 6 a.m. each day.

3. Put your screening sticker on your badge. You’re done! For infection control, please remove the screening sticker at the end of each day. Wipe your badge daily with disinfectant.

Updated visitor policy for obstetric patients

An adjustment has been made to the visitor policy. Effective Monday, Nov. 30, obstetric patients may have one designated visitor per day in both the inpatient and ambulatory setting. The visitor must remain the same for the duration of the
stay. The decision to limit obstetric visitors from two to one was made to address hospital room and clinic capacity limitations in those units as the community infection rate rises. This is a temporary adjustment and will be re-evaluated in mid-December. The same visitor adjustment will be applied — permanently — to obstetric patients who are COVID-19 positive.

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Testing results indicate high potential for COVID-19 spread in St. Louis County

About five out of every 100 St. Louis County adults were infected with COVID-19 earlier this fall, according to test results of a representative sample of county residents. The testing, conducted from mid-August through mid-October, was commissioned by the [St. Louis County Department of Public Health](https://www.stlouiscardinals.com) and carried out by Washington University’s [Institute for Public Health](https://www.wustl.edu/) as the COVID-19 St. Louis County Survey.

Results of the testing raise fresh concerns from experts about the high risk of further, rapid spread of the disease in the county — especially given the explosion in COVID-19 cases since the testing was conducted. “The relatively small proportion of the population that had evidence of previous infection via antibody
testing means that the size of the current surge we are experiencing in the region could be quite dramatic,” indicating that many people still are vulnerable, said Elvin Geng, MD, professor of medicine, in a recent KSDK story. “Under these conditions, we are already seeing a steep rise in cases that has the potential to overwhelm area hospitals.”

Local doctors lead effort to build better PPE for health-care workers

As COVID-19 impacted the St. Louis community last spring, internal medicine specialists Jennifer DeLaney, MD, and David Katzman, MD, witnessed firsthand the need for safe, comfortable and sustainable PPE for health-care workers.

DeLaney and Katzman, both instructors in clinical medicine at the School of Medicine, had an innovative solution: remodeling the powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR) — a PPE used during the Ebola and SARS epidemics — using parts of a CPAP machine and respiratory supplies. With the help of teams of engineers from Hunter Engineering and the Veterans Health Administration and funding from the St. Louis community, their prototype was transformed into one of only six PAPRs approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health for use during the public health emergency.
The end product, called the ADAPT, has a filter efficiency of 99.97% — 2.5 times safer than an N-95 mask — as well as a low-flow alarm and a fog-free face shield. It’s also comfortable for extended wear and reusable.

“We are ready to donate 300 units for use in ICUs, emergency departments and COVID units through our partnership with the university,” DeLaney said. “It is a heart-warming story, starting with prototype design from the local 3D printing and robotics community all the way up to full-scale, American-made manufacturing of a critical safety product to protect our health-care workers.”

A cup of gratitude

As reported in news outlets, front-line health-care workers and emergency responders are welcome to free cups of coffee from Starbucks during December in appreciation of their care and service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Any customer who identifies as a front-line responder will receive a tall brewed coffee (hot or iced) at no charge. Those who are eligible include doctors, pharmacists, firefighters, mental health workers and more. Hospital staff, such as security or housekeeping staff, and active-duty military are also included. Those who qualify can redeem the offer as many times as they like through the end of the year.

Special delivery for health-care workers
Thanks to LaCroix, cases of sparkling water were distributed to front-line healthcare workers over the Thanksgiving holiday. Shown here: Annette Hampton, with BJC HealthCare Distribution Operations, and Victoria Fraser, MD, chair of the Department of Medicine.

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**Don't commit nasal negligence**

Help ensure your colleagues are wearing masks correctly. Do they like science? Researchers determined the nose is a key entry point for the virus that causes COVID-19. The publication in the journal *Nature Medicine* explained that nasal cells in particular contain high levels of the proteins that SARS-CoV-2 attaches to in order to enter the body.

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**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](#)
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program for 24/7 work-life support: 844-365-4587
- View WUSM [employee and student testing data](#)
- Email story ideas and requests to heroes@wustl.edu

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

To ensure that this newsletter is delivered to your inbox, add updates@wusm.wustl.edu to your address book.