

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

December 23, 2020

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

125 inpatients confirmed positive **6** admitted, awaiting test results



Thank you
to everyone working
during the holidays!

Leadership of the School of Medicine would like to send a heartfelt thank you to everyone who is working over the holidays to keep all aspects of our patient care, education and research missions going strong during these unprecedented times. In particular, we extend a very special thank you to all of the faculty physicians, fellows, residents, nurses and other staff caring for COVID-19 patients, as well as the hundreds of individuals who are volunteering to vaccinate front-line workers over the coming days. Every member of the Washington University Medical Campus community should be extraordinarily proud of what we have accomplished together in this most challenging year.

Vaccine rollout continues



Critical care physician Tiffany Osborn, MD, MPH, gets her first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. Vaccinations on the Medical Campus began Dec. 17 with patient-facing personnel.

As of Tuesday, Dec. 22, BJC HealthCare and Washington University School of Medicine have administered the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to more than 7,400 patient-facing personnel across both institutions, with nearly 11,000 appointments scheduled. BJC and the School of Medicine have identified “patient-facing” as all personnel with prolonged patient interaction, including clinical staff and non-clinical staff such as environmental services, food services, patient access, public safety, etc.

The first wave of appointments targeted patient-facing personnel ages 50 and older, shortly followed by those 40 and older, because people in such age groups are at highest risk of severe illness or complications from COVID-19 infection. Evidence shows that risk for severe illness and death from the illness declines substantially in the younger-adult group, ages 16-39. Since the vaccination effort was launched on Dec. 17, BJC has received further assurances from the manufacturer of continuing availability of the vaccine, and BJC/WUSM have secured additional staff to be able to vaccinate more employees each day.

After feedback from many of you, the next round of vaccination invitations was

sent today to caregivers under the age of 40 who are identified to have frequent or prolonged exposure to COVID-19 patients. Identifying eligible personnel by COVID-concentrated areas is a manual process. Departmental leaders have worked as quickly as possible to organize the names and provide them to the BJC/WUSM vaccine planning team for the next wave of scheduling invites. Because it is a manual process, there are likely to be errors. We appreciate your patience. If you feel you have been excluded from this prioritization, please reach out to your department chair or program director.

Recording of second town hall now available

A second COVID-19 Vaccine Town Hall was held Monday, Dec. 21, for School of Medicine faculty, staff, residents, fellows and students. It provided information on the two COVID-19 vaccines currently approved for emergency use by the FDA, including efficacy and safety data. Speakers also discussed the plan for administering vaccinations on the Medical Campus in the coming weeks.



You may access [a recording of the session in Box](#).

For more information about COVID-19 vaccination, visit the [CDC](#) and [Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services](#) websites.

Study confirms COVID-19 is far more deadly than flu



New studies have confirmed that COVID-19 is far more harmful and deadly than the seasonal flu, according to research published Dec. 15 by School of Medicine scientists in the BMJ. A [recent article in U.S. News & World Report](#) about the study describes how researchers analyzed U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs data on more than 3,600 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 between Feb. 1 and June 17, 2020, and more than 12,600 hospitalized with the flu between Jan. 1, 2017, and Dec. 31, 2019. The death rate among hospitalized COVID-19 patients was 18.5%, while it was 5.3% for those hospitalized with the flu.

"Our research represents an apples-to-apples comparison between the two diseases," said Ziyad Al-Aly, MD, assistant professor of medicine and study senior author. "A deeper understanding of the health risks of COVID-19 helps to anticipate demand for health care services and to project mortality with greater accuracy."

Stay safe and well over the holidays



In its [guidelines for celebrating the winter holidays](#), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urges Americans against traveling as COVID-19 cases continue to rise. The best way to stay safe is to stay home and celebrate with only those who live in your household. For those who plan to join family and friends from other households, the guidelines include tips to reduce risk — as well as ideas for fun alternatives to traditional gatherings.

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 covid19.med.wustl.edu »

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