WashU Med COVID-19 Update

December 30, 2020

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

120 inpatients confirmed positive 6 admitted, awaiting test results

Dr. Anthony Fauci to speak at virtual Grand Rounds Jan. 7

Anthony Fauci, MD, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, will give the Gerald Medoff Visiting Professor lecture at the Department of Medicine’s virtual Grand Rounds from 8–8:45 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 7. All
Washington University and BJC HealthCare employees, residents, fellows and students are welcome to attend.

The title of the session is “Insights into the COVID-19 Pandemic.” Fauci will be joined by Washington University’s Vicky Fraser, MD, the Adolphus Busch Professor and head of the Department of Medicine, and by William Powderly, MD, the J. William Campbell Professor of Medicine, co-director of the Division of Infectious Diseases, assistant dean for clinical and translational research, the Larry J. Shapiro Director of the Institute for Public Health, and director of the Institute for Clinical and Translational Sciences. They will discuss the current pandemic as well as its impact on the fields of public health and infectious diseases. Questions were submitted ahead of the event.

You may watch the session live on YouTube. No registration required.

A recording of the event will be available within 24 hours on the Washington University Department of Medicine website.

New site opens for first-round COVID-19 vaccinations

Resident physician Kandice Roberts, MD, prepares a dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.
Vaccinations on the Medical Campus began Dec. 17 with patient-facing personnel.

To accelerate the vaccination process, an additional site will open Tuesday, Jan. 5, for first-round COVID-19 vaccinations. The new site is located in the BJC Institute of Health at Washington University, in the building’s Planning, Design and Construction offices on the second floor. Appointments are available at this location from 6 a.m.–1 p.m. Mondays and Fridays and 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

EPNEC will continue as a site for first- and second-round doses. All vaccinations continue to be by appointment only. Eligible employees will receive emails with details, including instructions on how to schedule a vaccination appointment.

Volunteers are still needed to staff some of the vaccination sites. If you are able to help, please sign up using the online Vaccine Volunteer Registration Form.

More details about vaccination are available on the covid19.med.wustl.edu website.

Vaccine distribution update

As of this morning, BJC HealthCare had sent out more than 34,000 vaccination emails to patient-facing personnel across BJC and Washington University School of Medicine. This includes all patient-facing personnel over the age of 40, and personnel between the ages of 18–39 who have prolonged interaction with COVID-19 patients.

BJC and the School of Medicine have identified “patient-facing” as all personnel with prolonged patient interaction, including clinical staff and nonclinical staff such as environmental services, food services, patient access, public safety, etc.

A total of 14,143 vaccines have been administered. Yesterday, 2,057 people were vaccinated, making it the largest vaccination day to date.
The remaining 6,000–7,000 invitation emails will be sent this weekend and Monday to patient-facing personnel based on supply of vaccine, equipment and staff. If you receive an email to schedule your COVID-19 vaccination, please do not forward it. Forwarding notifications outside the current scheduling tier could consume capacity faster than it can be secured.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the urgent need for staffing support at these vital vaccination clinics.

Podcast: Vaccines have arrived, but treatments are progressing more slowly

William Powderly, MD, discusses COVID-19 cases with staff in the intensive care unit at Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

The latest episode of the “Show Me the Science” podcast focuses on why development of effective treatments for COVID-19 have progressed slowly relative to vaccine development. Two vaccines are now available, yet only one drug, the steroid dexamethasone, has been proven to reduce the risk of death in those hospitalized with COVID-19.

William Powderly, MD, the J. William Campbell Professor of Medicine, co-director
of the Division of Infectious Diseases, assistant dean for clinical and translational research, the Larry J. Shapiro Director of the Institute for Public Health, and director of the Institute for Clinical and Translational Sciences, explains that one factor limiting development of treatments is a lack of large, well-controlled studies. In addition, two researchers — Eric Lenze, MD, the Wallace and Lucille K. Renard Professor of Psychiatry, and Angela Reiersen, MD, associate professor of psychiatry — offer some good news from a preliminary study finding that the psychiatric drug fluvoxamine may help prevent serious illness in patients with COVID-19. Now Lenze and Reiersen are expanding their trial to include COVID-19 patients from across the United States.

Read more and listen to the podcast on the School of Medicine website.

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Health-care workers reflect on holidays spent caring for COVID-19 patients

An NBC Nightly News story that aired Christmas night highlighted health-care workers spending the holiday caring for COVID-19 patients. Nguyet Nguyen, MD, assistant professor of medicine, was among those featured. “It’s been surreal. None of us ever anticipated something of this nature,” Nguyen said when asked to reflect on months of treating COVID-19 patients in the intensive care unit. “It’s a real test of our medical system. It’s a real test of us as human beings. I think it’s
Community physicians town hall: Recording available

Washington University Physicians and BJC HealthCare held a virtual town hall on Dec. 22 for community physicians titled, “Answering Your Patients’ Questions About the COVID-19 Vaccine.” Topics included vaccine safety, efficacy, side effects and guidance for patients who are pregnant/breastfeeding. The event’s speakers were Hilary Babcock, MD, MPH, professor of medicine, Ebony Carter, MD, MPH, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and chief of the Division of Clinical Research, Marta Perez, MD, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, and Rachel Presti, MD, PhD, associate professor of medicine and medical director of the Infectious Diseases Clinical Research Unit.

A recording of the event is publicly available.

The School of Medicine provides many resources to help you cope and manage your well-being, including referrals for professional counseling, Zoom sessions on
wellness and mindfulness, and more. Learn more on the Human Resources website.

“Together, we can get through this.”

“It’s time for us to put fear, partisanship and dismissive attitudes aside, as we roll up our sleeves and embrace the COVID-19 vaccine. Together, we can get through this.”

— Will Ross, MD, Alumni Endowed Professor of Medicine, associate dean for diversity, and principal officer for community partnerships

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

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