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Subject: SoM Operational Guidelines Dean's Update
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Tulane University School of Medicine Operational Guidelines Update

1 May 2020

Message from the Dean's Office

Dear Colleagues,

Tulane University School of Medicine has faced an unprecedented challenge with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Our clinical teams have been on the forefront of caring for the sick and have worked tirelessly under difficult circumstances. Our research teams are leading and participating in multiple clinical trials to discover effective treatments. The SOM rapidly implemented testing for the SARS-CoV-2 virus and new diagnostic assays are being developed. Our educational programs have remained strong, transitioning, when appropriate, to distance learning. Our medical students successfully led a nationwide effort to secure personal protective equipment. The safety of our faculty, staff, residents, and students has been a primary concern, and the SOM has allowed flexibility in work schedules, to maximize opportunities to work from home.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to remain a challenge for many months, there is evidence of a statewide reduction in the number of newly diagnosed cases, new hospitalizations, and number of patients requiring ventilation. Since education, clinical services and research are essential services of the University and Medical School, we plan to begin phasing in the return of faculty, staff and students.

The following guidelines and recommendations are made by the School of Medicine:

GENERAL:

- Effective May 18, 2020 departments and units should begin to gradually phase in the return of their faculty, staff and trainees (with the exception of medical students), with the goal of having as many employees as possible returned to the medical school campus by June 15, 2020.
 - Vulnerable individuals, as defined by the CDC, employees with vulnerable household residents who are uncomfortable returning to campus or employees with child-care concerns should discuss their situation with their supervisor, department administrator or chair. Supervisors should be as flexible as possible in dealing with these circumstances and should work to create opportunities for a limited number of employees to continue to work remotely, if possible.
 - All employees should discuss their return with their supervisor, in order to properly sequence their return.
 - Employees will continue to follow best practices, including wearing a mask or face covering at all times when in the presence of others (face masks will be distributed as necessary by the SOM); social distancing; hand hygiene; disinfection of frequently used items and surfaces; and daily self-monitoring.
 - Zoom-type meetings should continue to be widely utilized and in-person meetings or gatherings of >10 individuals are prohibited. Social distancing of 6' between individuals must be maintained in all gatherings
 - Further communications about safety measures will be forthcoming.
 - Any employees that exhibit flu-like symptoms should not come to work and should be evaluated by their healthcare provider. COVID-19 testing will be widely available via the School of Medicine and the Wellness Clinic.
(Email wellnessclinic@tulane.edu or call 988-HEAL (4325)).
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CLINICAL:

- In addition to emergencies, medical and surgical procedures may now resume for **time-sensitive medical conditions**, per the Louisiana Department of Health's Healthcare Facility Notice #2020-COVID19-All-0101 of April 20th (<http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/providers/LDH-MEMO-UPDATE-RESTORE-MED-SURG-Procedures.pdf>) and its clarification message issued 4/24/20 (<http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/providers/Memo-SurgeryGuidance.pdf>). Time-sensitive conditions are those surgical or medical procedures in which a delay, in the opinion of the medical professional, might adversely affect the patient or underlying disease process.
- The need for a time-sensitive medical condition procedure must be documented in the patient's medical chart. Patients should comply with strict social distancing measures from the time of preoperative evaluation through the day of surgery.
- Patients undergoing medical or surgical procedures shall receive appropriate pre-operative clinical evaluation and COVID-19 testing. Procedures for symptomatic patients are to be postponed.
- Each healthcare provider that performs medical or surgical procedures is required to contact the patient within 10-14 days after the procedure to determine whether the patient has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 since the procedure. Such contact is to be documented in the patient's medical record. If

a patient responds affirmatively, the provider will report electronically to Louisiana Department of Health - Office of Public Health.

- Preventive procedures/visits, such as well child visits or dental cleanings, can be deemed time-sensitive if performed with recommended preventive and social distancing precautions. However, telehealth visits should continue to be conducted when available and medically appropriate.
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RESEARCH:

- New non-COVID-19 related clinical research studies will no longer require Dean's office approval as from May 1st 2020.
 - Face-to-face interactions with participants in clinical research studies that have no direct drug or device therapeutic benefit can resume as from May 18, 2020, with the condition that participants are masked.
 - All clinical research patients/volunteers should wear a mask and continue to be prescreened for COVID-19 risk factors with the same questions being used to prescreen patients at our clinics and hospitals. If patients/volunteers are screened as positive, they should be recommended to see their primary care provider.
 - Although it is anticipated that remote monitoring of many studies will continue, the presence of study monitors from out of state will be allowed starting May 18th, under the condition that they are masked and that strict social distancing guidelines are followed
 - COVID-19 related studies will continue to be forwarded to mlampp@tulane.edu or rcruthir@tulane.edu for review by the COVID Research Treatment/Prevention Task Force.
 - Principal Investigators will continue to submit COVID-related protocols and supporting documents to the Scientific Review Committee at SRC@tulane.edu, at the same time as submitting to the IRB.
 - All research and laboratory activities must be performed such that strict social distancing guidelines are followed, as well as general best practices. In many cases staggering of research teams in laboratories may be necessary.
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Guidelines specific to medical student education will be forthcoming.

This pandemic has brought out the best in all our faculty, staff, residents, fellows, and students and the School of Medicine is immensely grateful for the work that all of you do. This is a stressful time for all, and we will continue to face a challenging time in the months ahead. Resources are available to employees, at no charge, through the Employee Assistance Program (1-800-624-5544 or <https://www.ndbh.com/>, company code: Tulane).

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