

March 6, 2020

Dear UMSOM Community:

I want to give you an update on the current situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19) as it impacts the UMSOM Community.

We are very fortunate to have a strong, unified system for preparedness and response across the campus, led in close coordination between UMB President, Dr. Bruce Jarrell, UMMS President, Dr. Mohan Suntha, UMMC President, Alison Brown, and myself. We also have tremendous leadership from our Incident Command System (ICS) that was established several weeks ago. The ICS is led by David Marcozzi, MD, Associate Professor of Emergency Management and Gregory Schrank, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, who are highly professional emergency management experts with experience marshalling national emergency situations. Working with the UMB Emergency Management Team, they have mobilized a team of professionals across the UMB Campus and UM Medical System to manage the full range of required operational systems – from logistics to protection to testing to treatment to communications.

Here is where we stand right now:

- Last night Governor Hogan reported the first three confirmed cases in Maryland. The three people live in Montgomery County (a couple and an individual). They were all traveling back from an international trip, so the source of the virus was not community based. They are remaining at home and are doing well. More specific information about these cases will be forthcoming at the MDH website:
<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx>
- We anticipate that more cases will be identified, and this is exactly what we have been preparing for. Our primary focus remains on **prevention and protection**. We will communicate regularly with you as things develop. While it is “business as usual” right now, the situation is changing rapidly, and we are taking steps to ensure that everyone is safe. In this respect, the CDC strongly recommends that we all take the following everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases:
 - **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
 - **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.**
 - **Stay home when you are sick.**
 - **Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.**

- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.**
- **Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.**
 - **CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.**
 - **Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for **health workers** and **people who are taking care of someone in close settings** (at home or in a health care facility).**
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.**
- **Please refer to the UMSOM website special Coronavirus website for complete official information and resources on Coronavirus. This is updated on a daily basis and includes all of the latest information about policies and guidelines, travel restrictions, prevention and safety tips and links to the UMB and UMMS Coronavirus websites as well as official government websites.**

<https://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/news/coronavirus/>

- **As you may know, we are fortunate to have several UMSOM faculty experts who are among the top scientists in the nation on infectious disease and vaccine development.** Since they are directly involved in developing therapeutics and potential vaccines for Coronavirus, they are being called upon for guidance and expertise on these issues. You will see some of them, including Dr. Kathy Neuzil, Dr. Matthew Frieman, and Dr. Wilbur Chen, appearing on major national media outlets to provide expertise on issues related to the virus.

Dr. Neuzil on CNN <https://bit.ly/2VT3OrE>

Dr. Frieman on CNN: <https://bit.ly/2VT3OrE>

Finally, I want to extend my appreciation to each of you for your help in managing this situation. I know many of you have been involved in the extensive preparedness planning that has been underway for several weeks. Each one of you can now play a role in prevention, and by simply caring for each other. Remain calm, follow health guidelines, and maintain a healthy lifestyle. We have shown tremendous strength as a community in challenging times. I am confident that we will manage this situation effectively and return to our daily routines as soon as we are able.

Sincerely,



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John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean,
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