

March 12, 2020

Tulane School of Medicine

Guidelines Regarding SOM Research Operations

In keeping with recommendations of public health officials, Tulane University has decided to conduct online classes for undergraduates and certain graduate and professional students beginning March 23rd through the end of the semester. Clinical-based programs, practicums, medical rotations and in-lab training/research will not transition to remote instruction. To read President Fitts' announcement click [here](https://tulane.edu/tulane-university-moves-online-instruction-cancels-large-events). (<https://tulane.edu/tulane-university-moves-online-instruction-cancels-large-events>)

This transition should have little impact, at present, on SOM's research operations, other than the need for taking the usual preventative measures and social distancing measures. Therefore, research laboratories and facilities are expected to continue operations. However, the situation is obviously fluid and so investigators should plan ahead in the event that laboratories need to ramp down or temporarily cease operations. The Vivarium is operating as usual and has a pandemic plan to implement when appropriate. Researchers should maintain a sufficient inventory of critical supplies that may be impacted by potential shipping delays.

Administrative and regulatory aspects of all clinical research studies, including studies that are in process, should continue. Clinical research patients and volunteers should be prescreened for COVID-19 risk factors with the same questions being used to prescreen patients at our clinics and hospitals (see attachment). If patients are screened as positive, they should be offered a mask and recommended to see their primary care provider. Coordinators are encouraged to reach out to CROs to discuss COVID-19 protocols as needed. Study monitors from out of state should not be allowed on site; remote monitoring, if possible, should be implemented.

Leaders/Managers should ensure they have access to all contact information for their staff, and should require that all employees that exhibit flu-like symptoms not come to work and to be evaluated by their healthcare provider. Appropriate and adequate cross training of staff to fill in for others who may be unable to work is encouraged, specifically for those performing critical tasks.

Reports of the impacts of COVID-19 around the world and in the US can be troubling, especially for those who are from or have friends in highly affected areas. 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).

For more information on Tulane's COVID-19 response, FAQs, and the preventative measures, click [here](https://campushealth.tulane.edu/health-center/primary-care/infectious-disease-care/coronavirus-covid-19). (<https://campushealth.tulane.edu/health-center/primary-care/infectious-disease-care/coronavirus-covid-19>)

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