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COVID-19 AND 'CORONAVIRUS' UPDATES

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THE IMPACT ON OUR HEALTH SYSTEM

This is the fifth update for Regents regarding the SARS-CoV-2 virus (novel coronavirus), the COVID-19 illness it creates, and the impact on the University's health and academic enterprise.

The situation continues to evolve rapidly. On Wednesday, March 11 the World Health Organization (WHO) made an [official declaration](#) of a pandemic. In response, and in an effort to support social distancing as a public health mitigation strategy, a number of federal and state agencies issued new guidance. Governor Newsom and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) urged the cancellation of events](#) larger than 250 as well as some smaller events to support the social distancing mitigation strategy. President Trump issued a [proclamation with travel restrictions](#) from continental Europe on March 11 and followed up on March 13 with a [declaration of a national emergency](#). All UC campuses have moved, or are in the process of moving, to an online format for classes and exams through early April. Finally, both the [UC Health division office and UCOP headquarters have asked most employees to work-from-home for the next few weeks](#).

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION DECLARATION OF PANDEMIC

On March 11, [WHO made the anticipated declaration of a pandemic](#), meaning the epidemic is occurring in multiple countries and affecting the population to such an extent that it puts significant strains on public health systems. Although the pandemic declaration indicates geographic spread, it does not indicate greater severity in a specific region such as California.

I am pleased with the actions of Governor Newsom, CDPH and county health officials in taking steps to help "[flatten the curve](#)." This objective seeks to slow the spread of the virus so as not to overwhelm local medical facilities with cases. Strategies to flatten the curve include [Nonpharmaceutical Interventions \(NPIs\)](#) such as social distancing. I am pleased so many private sector firms have recognized their role in this effort and are directing employees to work remotely. **I urge other employers to adopt these measures to the maximum degree possible.**

UC Priorities on COVID-19

1. Providing patient care for those with COVID-19, while ensuring patients in need of tertiary/quaternary care due to other conditions continue to receive high-quality care.
2. Protecting our communities including UC personnel from further spread by taking appropriate actions and forcefully advocating others to do the same.
3. Conducting basic, translational and cross-disciplinary research across all UC campuses and collaborating to accelerate and amplify findings for the public benefit.

Critical operations will continue at all UC campus and system locations. Our health centers provide vital services to their communities and continue to do so.

UC hospitals have active emergency operations centers and are implementing surge plans in anticipation of an increase in suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19. UCSF Health, UCI Health, and UCLA Health have deployed surge tents near their emergency department to help with triage.



| TABLE 1: COVID-19 Patients by Site | |
|--|-------------------------|
| LOCATIONS | CURRENT CONFIRMED CASES |
| UC Davis Health | 1 |
| UCSF Health | 4 |
| UCI Health | 0 |
| UCLA Health | 0 |
| UC San Diego Health | 4 |
| UC Campuses | 0 |
| TOTAL | 9 |
| Revised to reflect current confirmed counts rather than total to date. | |

In-house SARS-CoV-2 testing is underway at UC San Diego Health, UCSF Health and UCLA Health. We expect UC Davis Health to begin in-house testing next week and UCI Health to begin in-house testing soon. The student health centers are working with adjacent medical centers in some instances to provide testing and also have access to state and commercial laboratory testing.

Testing is focused on UC patients and each medical center has processes in place to ensure medically appropriate testing is available to assist health care providers in care delivery.

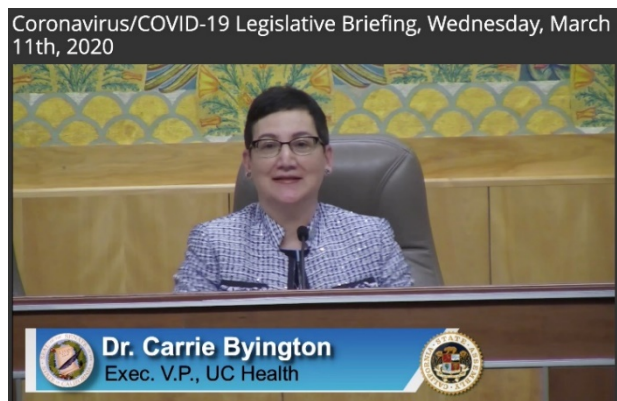
Across the medical centers we have evaluated approximately 100 persons under investigation (PUI) and have cared for 15 patients with known COVID-19 disease. As we move into a period of community transmission, we will no longer report PUIs. We are also changing our reporting to include only patients currently hospitalized at UC health centers. To date we have cared for a total of 15 people with COVID-19 and, as seen in Table 1, nine remain in the hospital.

BRIEFING IN SACRAMENTO FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

On March 11, in Sacramento, I participated in a panel briefing for elected officials and the public led by Assembly Member Jim Wood, Chair of the Health Committee. This was an opportunity to share facts about the virus, prevention techniques, status of testing and to urge additional action steps.

Some of the panel's key points included:

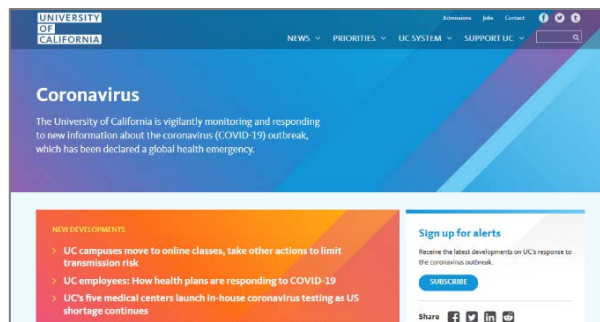
- People are justifiably concerned because this strain of coronavirus is new, and there is uncertainty as we enter a pandemic. However, we have experience with other coronaviruses and other pandemics that help California and the world respond to this outbreak.
- Collaboration among local health departments, state agencies and health care providers have been excellent and is a key to meeting the challenges of mitigation.
- We have learned a great deal about this coronavirus since it was announced to the world on December 31, 2019. Over the past few weeks: Researchers at UC Santa Cruz posted the complete genome of the virus; a bioinformatic group including UC Riverside mapped a replication protein that may represent a point of vulnerability; and, three UC medical centers have begun in-house testing. [Learn more about UC's efforts here.](#)
- The experience from China indicates that the majority of healthy people who contract the virus will experience symptoms similar to influenza and can be managed from home. Those individuals should self-isolate, rest and drink fluids to remain hydrated.
- The elderly and those with underlying health conditions are at higher-risk and may experience more severe symptoms. See this link for [CDC guidance on when to seek medical care](#) for suspected COVID-19.
- Children represented only ~2% of infections diagnosed in China. They may experience fewer symptoms than older patients but could potentially transmit infections. Closing schools is one form of social distancing that communities may undertake to prevent children from being infected and transmitting infection to others who are vulnerable including parents and grandparents.



At UC, our top priorities remain the protection our students, employees and communities, and marshalling our patient care and research capabilities for the public good.

UPDATED PORTAL AGGREGATES UC SYSTEMWIDE INFORMATION

In a fast-moving situation, and with multiple campuses and medical centers working on COVID-19 research and patient care, UC has launched an updated informational page that consolidates information in one place. [The site aggregates UC systemwide resources, campus-specific COVID-19 information, and links to public health organizations.](#) Visitors can subscribe for updates.



MATCH DAY GOING VIRTUAL

One of the most important days in the life of a medical student is Match Day, a day when students learn where they have matched for their residency training. The day is an emotional one and offers a moment to acknowledge hard work and celebrate with family and friends. This year's UC Match Day, on March 20, will be held online. I regret that the traditional format is not feasible this time due to social distancing and other precautions necessary to keep everyone healthy. Be assured the University and medical schools intend to celebrate the achievements of our students and look forward to marking the occasion after this public health emergency passes.

IMPACT ON OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

UC Washington Program (UCDC)

- On Tuesday, March 10 UC Provost Michael T. Brown announced a temporary suspension of the UC Washington Program (UCDC) for the spring 2020 academic quarter and the remainder of the spring 2020 academic semester in light of ongoing developments with COVID-19 and UC's coordinated efforts to protect student and employee health and safety. Although UCDC's student population is not at high risk (unless there are underlying health conditions), should a student test positive, UCDC has limited ability to isolate that individual or to quarantine others, as needed.
- Students enrolled in the current winter 2020 quarter will be able to complete their UCDC studies and will be returning to their home campuses by Saturday, March 14; semester students are to vacate the UC Washington Center premises no later than March 20.
- Staff at UCDC will be working directly with UCDC campus coordinators to identify ways to lessen the impact of reabsorbing students into local campus enrollment for the spring 2020 quarter. For semester students currently enrolled at UCDC and completing their internships, UCDC will be working with the campuses to determine appropriate academic credit for internships and possible alternative options for online instruction. UCDC is also working with UCOP staff to determine appropriate next steps, including arrangement of return travel to California for these semester students.

UC Education Abroad Program (UCEAP)

- On March 12, the US Department of State and the CDC raised the travel advisory for Europe to Level 3. In accordance with UC Education Abroad Program (UCEAP) policy, spring term programs in impacted European countries are being suspended.
- This affects 454 UCEAP students (93 students pre-departure, 361 students in programs in progress) in programs in 10 European countries – Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

UCEAP is coordinating with Registrar and Financial Aid offices at each UC undergraduate campus, and our international partners, to ensure that students in these programs receive the maximum amount of academic credit and to minimize the financial implications for each student related to these program suspensions.

LEVERAGING TELEHEALTH FOR MEDICAL ADVICE AND MINOR AILMENTS

During this public health emergency, in-person appointments may become more difficult to obtain or be less desirable for patients with compromised immune systems or underlying health conditions. Choosing telehealth can also free up appointment slots for those who require in-person evaluation due to their condition. [Learn how UC employees can access telehealth services through your health plan.](#)

Likewise, students who have UC SHIP or other insurance can access telehealth through their student health center's portal or directly at [Live Health Online](#).

Telehealth should never be used in an emergency.

ADVICE: IF YOU GET SICK

If you become ill and have mild symptoms you may be able to remain at home.

[Specific guidance from the CDC](#) includes:

- Staying home, separated from other people and pets.
- Not using public transportation.
- Not attending events.
- Alerting your doctor's office, urgent care or emergency room before going and following their instructions so you can get the care you need without exposing others. Telehealth options should also be considered.
- Wearing a facemask if you feel sick. Although facemasks will not prevent a healthy person from exposure, a facemask on an ill person will help keep others healthy by reducing the viral 'plume' produced by your coughing and sneezing.
- Cleaning your hands often, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has at least a 60% alcohol content.
- Using household disinfectants or diluted bleach to clean hard surfaces that you are touching such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets and sinks.
 - Prepare a diluted bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water, **or**
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Avoiding sharing of dishes, cups, towels or bedding with others.
- Washing items in the warmest setting and thoroughly dry before touching. You may also use one of the [disinfectants pre-approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) for use against emerging enveloped viral pathogens](#).
- Using trash can liners so contaminated tissues and other items can be removed without touching, and disinfecting any laundry hampers that come in contact with contaminated clothes, sheets or towels.
- If your symptoms worsen, contact your doctor or health care provider. They may advise you to be evaluated. In all scenarios, you should avoid contact with others except for medical personnel who have been advised of your condition.

KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED THROUGH PUBLISHED MATERIALS

UC campuses have been publishing extensive educational materials for the public, our students, and staff. UCOP is distributing guidance to facilitate smooth operations. Examples include:

- [UCOP Telecommuting and Limited Onsite Operational Status](#) - **NEW**

- [Novel Coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\) Paid Leave and Remote Work Provisions](#)
- [President's Directive on Travel to Level 2/3 Countries; MRT Emergency Powers](#)
- [How UC is Responding to the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - **UPDATED**](#)
- [Guidance for UC Locations](#)
- [President's Directive on Travel to China](#)
- [President's Directive on Travel to South Korea and other Warning - Level 3 Countries](#)
- [Information for Parents and Students](#)
- [A Summary of UC's System Involvement in COVID-19 Patient Care and Research](#)

You can also find the latest travel information on the CDC website - [Information for Travel](#).

IN CLOSING

I applaud WHO for the formal declaration of a pandemic. We share an interconnected world and must learn from each other as this public health emergency continues. Science will inform our actions and strengthen our individual and collective success. I am so proud of the doctors, nurses and all of our health staff who are caring for patients at our health centers; the researchers who are probing the virus for vulnerabilities; and the policy makers who are making informed decisions. We will get through this together by caring for each other and following the science.

I will be providing ongoing updates twice weekly as warranted. Please follow me on Twitter [@carrie_byington](#), where I provide links to important information in real-time. Together we can protect the health of our students, employees, and all Californians.

Sincerely,

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