

March 20, 2020

## COVID-19 AND 'CORONAVIRUS' UPDATES

### CARRIE L. BYINGTON, MD

Executive Vice President, UC Health



#### THE IMPACT ON OUR HEALTH SYSTEM

This is the sixth update for Regents regarding the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic and the impact on the University's health and academic enterprise. Beginning today, updates will be issued on Fridays.

A significant number of actions have taken place at federal, state and local levels as well as across UC. Some of these were included in my [briefing to the Regents earlier this week](#) (begins at 1:30:00).

I begin this update by acknowledging that our health care workers are providing care in very challenging circumstances and face the same exposure risks in the community as all persons. We have had some health care workers test positive recently, believed to have been community acquired. Our thoughts are with them as well as others who are providing critical services during this unprecedented public health emergency. As testing becomes more readily available, we can realistically expect more of our workforce and community members to test positive. The implementation of nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), especially shelter-in-place and social distancing strategies, will help mitigate additional spread.

I was pleased to join UCSF Chancellor Sam Hawgood, UCLA Vice Chancellor John Mazziotta, and other health care leaders for a [conference call with California Senator Dianne Feinstein](#). It was a productive conversation, and we appreciate the Senator's interest and advocacy.

#### GOVERNOR NEWSOM ISSUES STATEWIDE STAY-AT-HOME ORDER

On Thursday, the Governor made a difficult but necessary decision to issue a [stay-at-home order](#) for the entire state. This action builds on those already taken by a number of counties and cities in California. We are at a critical moment. Reducing in-person interactions is one of the main ways we can "flatten the curve," so our medical and health centers can handle the influx of additional patients while continuing to deliver high-quality care to all.

Earlier in the week, Governor Newsom outlined three major actions underway:

- Secure properties to shelter the homeless;
- Re-open unused hospital facilities and potentially convert others to hospitals; and,
- Procure additional medical equipment, such as ventilators.

Additionally, he issued a directive that [enables first responders, care providers, and workers who are asymptomatic and taking precautions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, to continue working](#) during the period of this emergency to address the increased demand for healthcare workers and first responders.

The [California Legislature approved up to \\$1 billion in new spending](#) to combat the coronavirus outbreak and then suspended their in-person office work through April 13.

In a [letter to President Trump on Wednesday](#), Governor Newsom asked the federal government to deploy the USNS Mercy Hospital Ship to the port of Los Angeles. In that letter, he also stated that up to 56 percent of Californians may contract the virus.

I am grateful for Governor Newsom's actions, including the temporary relaxation of state regulations that impede a prompt response.

### **COORDINATING BODY CREATED TO STRENGTHEN UC HEALTH'S RESPONSE**

UC Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Rachael Nava, acting on the authority delegated by President Napolitano, charged me with establishing and chairing a subcommittee of UCOP's Management Response Team (MRT) named the **UC Health Coordinating Committee** (the UCHCC).

The UCHCC will advise on UC Health's response to the pandemic and will consult with the Chair of the MRT. Specific responsibilities include:

- Fielding questions from UC Health leaders and offering expert advice through the incident command structure at each UC Health location.
- Facilitating collaboration among internal stakeholders including health care workers, patients, health professional students and residents.
- Coordinating with external stakeholders including federal and state public health officials, other health systems, and relevant professional organizations.

UCHCC will include standing and ad hoc groups of subject matter experts in public health, infectious disease, laboratory medicine, critical care medicine, telehealth, pharmacy, professional education and other disciplines to assist in navigating the ethical, legal and social issues that will arise in the course of responding to the pandemic. UCHCC participation also includes UC administrative functions such as Risk Services, Strategic Planning, and External Relations and Communications. **We are fortunate that UC has deep expertise across its enterprise.**

As Chair, I've asked Amina Aseffa, MPH, Systemwide Readiness Lead, to be the group's administrative lead. UCHCC will coordinate with the incident command centers at each hospital, the Chief Medical and Nursing Officers and the CEOs, and will work with all of our health centers and with the state.

As you recall, I previously announced the formation of a **UC Public Health Advisory Group** and an **EVP Clinical Advisory Panel** for UC Health that includes: Dr. Thomas Nesbitt, UC Davis; Dr. Thomas Cesario, UC Irvine; Dr. Michael Ayoub, UCLA; and Dr. Peter Heseltine, UC Irvine. These physicians are assisting with coordination of the significant clinical issues across UC Health and will be part of the UCHCC.

I am also in the process of creating additional workgroups with Subject Matter Expertise and will be asking for additional volunteers in the coming days.

### **UC IN-HOUSE TESTING CAPACITY CONTINUES TO GROW**

Our in-house testing capacity is growing each day as a result of multiple initiatives. On Thursday, UCSF Health, with support from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and CZ Biohub, [announced a collaboration that will increase in-house capacity](#) to serve patient populations at UCSF Health, Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and sites operated by the San

Francisco Department of Public Health. This week UC Davis Health and UC Irvine Health also began to offer in-house testing. As of today, all five UC health centers have in-house testing capabilities and are working together to increase capacity across the system.

Commercially manufactured tests also are becoming more available. Roche delivered testing kits to UCSF Health, UCLA Health and UC Davis Health that should be in use by Monday, after testing validation. Kits were also supplied by Genmark to four of our health centers.

Tests are prioritized for UC inpatients, ER patients and those coming through respiratory clinics that meet testing criteria. Statewide, according to the California Department of Public Health, approximately 16,900 tests have been conducted in California as of Thursday evening. This includes the latest numbers California has received from commercial and private labs.

### UC RESEARCH CONTINUES TO LEAD THE WAY

Dr. James Lloyd-Smith and Dr. Amandine Gamble of UCLA Health, and others [published a letter in the New England Journal of Medicine](#) about their research showing the virus can live on cardboard for up to 24 hours and on hard surfaces such as stainless steel for two to three days.



QBI Coronavirus Research Group - Team Science at Work

At UCSF, the [Quantitative Biosciences Institute Coronavirus Research Group \(QCRG\)](#) is testing whether existing drugs used for other conditions have clinical benefits in the treatment of COVID-19. The newly formed initiative, [covered by The New York Times](#), pools expertise in biochemistry, virology, structural, computational, chemical and systems biology to understand how the virus hijacks human cells for its replication.

### Clinical Care

All of our sites continue to care for patients with COVID-19. As of today we have cared for 95 patients and more than 400 are awaiting COVID test results. The

current patients hospitalized across our system are shown in Table 1. UCSF offered grand rounds on March 19 describing clinical aspects of caring for COVID-19 patients. The session was attended virtually by over 3,500 people. [A recording is available here.](#)

### UC EXECUTIVE ORDER UPDATES LEAVE POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES

I want to highlight and applaud [President Janet Napolitano's executive order](#), issued March 16. The order, retroactive to March 1 and continuing through the end of the year, updates UC's paid administrative leave policy to make all employees eligible to receive a one-time allotment of up to 128 hours of paid administrative leave based on certain conditions:

Table 1: Active Confirmed Cases	
LOCATIONS	CURRENT CONFIRMED
UC Davis Health	1
UCSF Health	8
UCI Health	2
UCLA Health	13
UC San Diego Health	14
UC Campuses*	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>
*Campus counts confirmed cases, not necessarily hospitalized	

- When an employee is unable to work due to the employee's own COVID-19-related illness or that of a family member;
- When an employee is unable to work because the employee has been directed not to come to the worksite for COVID-19-related reasons and/or the work site has implemented a COVID-19-related remote-work program or is under a shelter in place order, and it is not operationally feasible for the employee to work remotely; or,
- When an employee is unable to work because a COVID-19-related school or daycare closure requires the employee to be at home with a child or dependent, and it is not operationally feasible for the employee to work remotely or in conjunction with the childcare commitment.

It is also important to note that Administrative Leaves require supervisor's approval and must not impede the operations of critical health and medical operations.

### **UC SUBMITS INPUT TO CONGRESS ON PANDEMIC-RELATED NEEDS**

UC President Janet Napolitano sent a letter to California's federal congressional delegation outlining the University's higher education, medical care and research needs as Congress develops COVID-19 emergency legislation. The letter makes a number of points, including:

- The response from public universities to the COVID-19 virus has brought on significant financial stress. The University requests that Congress provide significant investment to stabilize colleges and universities as we grapple with unprecedented expenses and lost revenue while also upholding our commitment to the students and communities we serve.
- Federal funding is needed to reimburse hospitals for costs accruing as a consequence of creating infrastructure and staffing to care for COVID-19 patients and our health care workers and for treating patients lacking insurance coverage, including people experiencing homelessness, and who may be referred by public health authorities to our hospitals.
- The University seeks delays in several pending rule and reimbursement changes so organizations can focus on addressing immediate needs created by the pandemic.
  - This includes delaying a rule change by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid's (CMS) via its Medicaid Fiscal Accountability rule, which, if finalized, would severely undermine critical financing that supports the health care safety net.
  - The University also seeks delays in cuts to Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments. The current extension is set to expire on May 22. Those payments constitute a critical source of funding for health care safety net hospitals like UC Health.
  - Suspension of the planned 2 percent reduction in Medicare payments, referred to as the "Medicare sequester," so we have greater flexibility to respond to the crisis.
- Furthermore, to fully realize the potential of telehealth in this situation, UC urges giving CMS the needed authority to override state restrictions that inhibit providers from treating patients outside of their state and clarify that providers may provide telehealth services to Medicare beneficiaries despite state laws, regulations and requirements that constrain use.

### **FEDERAL ACTIONS**

On Monday, [President Trump advised that groups should be limited to no more than 10](#) and on Thursday, the [U.S. State Department raised its global travel advisory to a Level 4](#) "Do Not Travel" and urged Americans abroad to return home.

## UC LEADERSHIP URGE PREPAREDNESS AND REMAINING CALM

President Napolitano appeared on [MSNBC](#) on Sunday to urge the public to take precautions seriously and follow the guidance of public health officials, and [released a letter to the UC community](#). UCLA Health President Johnese Spisso appeared on “[Meet the Press](#)” to provide information on how academic medical centers such as ours are responding to the crisis.



# Los Angeles Times

## Trump declares emergency

**LAUSD TO SHUT FOR AT LEAST 2 WEEKS**

Direct move affects 670,000 students as officials plan to open centers for parents with children's issues.

By Thomas H. Brown, Michael Schwartz, Patricia Torres and Michael Schwartz

Major school districts throughout California, including Los Angeles Unified, announced Wednesday that they will shut down for at least two weeks, starting as early as Monday.

Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest in the state, said it will close for at least two weeks, starting Monday.

The district's superintendent, Michael Goetz, said the move is necessary to protect the health of students and staff.

Other districts, including San Diego Unified and San Jose Unified, also announced closures.

The closures are part of a state-wide effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, which has caused a global health crisis.

State officials said the move is necessary to prevent the virus from spreading to schools and communities.

Parents are being urged to stay home and avoid public places. Schools are also being asked to provide information to parents about the situation.

The closures are expected to last at least two weeks, but could be extended if the situation does not improve.

Los Angeles Unified School District is the largest in the state, with over 670,000 students. It is expected to be the first to close.

San Diego Unified School District, with about 350,000 students, is also expected to close. San Jose Unified School District, with about 150,000 students, is also expected to close.

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STUDENTS at Wheatley High School say howling Pekingese dogs for use, are no reason for at least two weeks.

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**Action grants money to fight virus**

President does not offer specifics on coronavirus response but says he'll 'likely' get tested.

By Elyse Lironi and Michael Schwartz

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump announced a new federal emergency response plan Wednesday, which will allow some federal agencies to use money to help states and localities respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

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## UC IN-HOUSE TESTING DRAWS NATIONAL ATTENTION

As previously communicated UC Health hospital laboratories are performing in-house testing of patients for SARS-CoV-2.

Testing is focused on inpatients, ER patients and some outpatients who meet CDC testing criteria, including those in respiratory distress. Although initial volume is limited, we are actively working to scale up capabilities to reach the broader community. This effort is an impressive example of UC's innovation and capabilities and was featured on the front page of the [Los Angeles Times](#) (paywall). This follows an earlier article in the Sacramento Bee. I am grateful to Dr. Steven Gonias, chairman of the Department of Pathology at UCSD Health, for leading our systemwide initiative and all lab personnel working behind the scenes to provide this urgently needed testing.

## UC SCHOOLS AMONG BEST IN 2020 US NEWS & WORLD REPORT RANKINGS

With so much news devoted to SARS-CoV-2 virus, it's good to remind ourselves of our capabilities and strengths. On Tuesday, U.S. News & World Report released its rankings of the nation's best graduate schools, including Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy for 2021. UC's schools once again did exceptionally well. Congratulations to the Deans, Faculty, Students and Staff who make these programs the leaders in their fields.

## Lengthy school closures? They're a reality overseas

Pandemic already has over 421 million pupils at home

By Thomas H. Brown, Michael Schwartz, Patricia Torres and Michael Schwartz

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**Stimulus package deal is reached**

GOP talks at Pelosi's statement and Trump tweets his approval.

By Elyse Lironi and Michael Schwartz

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer announced Wednesday that they have reached a deal on a \$2 trillion stimulus package to help states and localities respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

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## UC ramping up in-house testing

Systems five medical centers hope more via academic efforts to identify patients.

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BRIAN ROWLAND, senior clinical lab operations manager at UCSD Health, works on a specimen while working to identify patients by the name and date.

<b>Schools of Medicine: Research</b>	
# 6 (tie)	UCLA Geffen School of Medicine
# 6 (tie)	UCSF School of Medicine
# 21	UC San Diego School of Medicine
# 40	UC Davis School of Medicine
# 44	UC Irvine School of Medicine
# 91	UC Riverside School of Medicine
<b>Schools of Nursing: Master's</b>	
# 11	UCSF School of Nursing
# 20	UCLA School of Nursing
# 40	UC Davis School of Nursing
# 51	UCI School of Nursing
<b>Schools of Pharmacy</b>	
# 2	UCSF School of Pharmacy
# 18	UC San Diego School of Pharmacy

## IT'S MATCH DAY, A MILESTONE FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATES

Today is 'Match Day,' when graduating medical students across the country find out where they will go for their residencies (graduate medical education). This is a joyous event that recognizes a milestone moment in a life of hard work and study. At UC, we typically celebrate the occasion at all of our medical schools with our students, their families, and our faculty and staff.

We are disappointed today's celebrations cannot be in-person, but we will mark the occasion meaningfully once we get past the current public health emergency. In the meantime, we applaud the creativity and ingenuity of our medical schools for going to great lengths to mark this important day online.



Our medical schools set up virtual events via the Zoom platform so deans can congratulate their students, results unveiled and photos shared via social media channels.

Please join me in following our school of medicine on Facebook or Twitter, watching for posts tagged with #Match2020, and offering your congratulations!

**UCSF School of Medicine Twitter:** [@UCSFMedicine](https://twitter.com/UCSFMedicine)

**UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine Twitter:** [@dqsomucla](https://twitter.com/dqsomucla)

**UC Davis Facebook:** [@UCDavisMedicine](https://www.facebook.com/UCDavisMedicine)

**UC Irvine School of Medicine:** [@UCIrvineSOM](https://www.facebook.com/UCIrvineSOM)

**UC Riverside SOM Twitter:** [@UCRSOM](https://twitter.com/UCRSOM)

**UC San Diego School of Medicine Twitter:** [@UCSDMedSchool](https://twitter.com/UCSDMedSchool)

We will share photos from Friday's virtual event in future issues.

## IMPACT ON OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- In light of a recent announcement by the Sacramento County Department of Public Health, **UC Center Sacramento (UCCS)** will now be offering a fully online experience for its spring 2020 program. This includes academic courses being offered fully online, with no in-person gatherings for any reason. Most internship offices have agreed to remotely supervise their student-interns via telephone or video and providing students with projects for completion at their residence. This plan should permit the many seniors needing UCCS credits for graduation to obtain them.
- Students are being encouraged to remain in place rather than traveling to Sacramento. Should students need, they may travel to Sacramento and live in the housing available to UCCS students (in a single unit setup). Housing refunds will be given to students who choose to remain at home.
- The **UC Education Abroad Program (UCEAP)** has suspended many of its summer 2020 programs.

## 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

The situation is changing rapidly. 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:

- [Equity and Inclusion in the Face of COVID-19 \(NEW\)](#)
- [Novel Coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\) Paid Leave and Remote Work Provisions - UPDATED](#)
- [President's Letter to the UC Community \(NEW\)](#)
- [President's Directive on Travel to Level 2/3 Countries; MRT Emergency Powers](#)
- [How UC is Responding to the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Guidance for UC Locations](#)
- [President's Directive on Travel to China](#)
- [President's Directive on Travel to 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 am heartened by the rapid responses at all levels of the UC System to this pandemic. The challenges of this public health emergency are being met with an equivalent amount of determination and decisive actions. The social distancing steps may seem alarming but are necessary to slow the spread of the virus and essential in our efforts to "Flatten the Curve." We are working together by staying apart.

I will be providing ongoing updates weekly as warranted. Please follow me on Twitter [@carrie\\_byington](#), where I provide links to important information in real-time. I ask you to remain *Boldly Californian*. Together we can protect the health of our students, employees, the state and the nation.

Sincerely,

Carrie L. Byington, MD  
Executive Vice President  
UC Health