Research Town Hall

May 13, 2020
Town Hall Panelists

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Executive Vice President for Research

Susan Meyn
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Jennifer Pietenpol, PhD
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Lori Rolando, MD, MPH, FACOEM
Director Occupational Health

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Senior Vice President Population & Public Health

Jeanne Wallace, DVM
Vice President Animal Care

Kevin Warren, MS, CHMM
Senior Director Environmental Health & Safety
Multi-phase Plan for Research Activities

Key Principles

VUMC will issue institution-wide notifications regarding the date for commencing any and each Phase.

Aligned to
• Roadmap for Reopening Nashville
• VUMC clinical enterprise policies covering SARS-CoV-2 infection control and monitoring

Any negative trends in SARS-CoV-2 infection in any area will be rapidly addressed with appropriate biosafety measures; and, that area may be required to return to a more restricted phase.

If metrics of SARS-CoV-2 infection and health system capacity change significantly, VUMC may be required to re-impose restrictions on non-clinical activity. Leaders must develop a shutdown contingency plan in case needed to rapidly reduce activities.

www.vumc.org/oor/contingency-and-continuity-planning-vumc-research-labs-and-cores
www.vumc.org/oor/sites/default/files/access_controlled_files/Research%20Rampup%20Communication_V5_05052020-2.pdf
Multi-phase Plan for Research Activities

Safety Practices

- Observe **strict physical distancing > 6ft**, and **frequent hand hygiene**
- Leaders will **continuously assess** personnel physical distancing
- All employees must **monitor for COVID-19 symptoms**
- **Cloth masks must be worn** in VUMC public areas
- **Virtual** meeting applications are encouraged
- Current proposed **guidelines apply to campus-based and off-site research activities**
- Employees **65 years** or older, or with **high-risk** factors related to COVID-19, should **continue to work from home**
- Most “**dry lab**” research and research **administrative support** activities should **continue work from home as much as possible**
- **Clinical/human participant research** is subject to leadership review and approval

## VUMC Multi-phase Plan for Research Activity Ramp Up

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<tr>
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<th>Phase 2^</th>
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*Cloth masks must be worn in public areas of the medical center. Research cores/shared facilities are considered public areas. If performing human participants research and engaged with patient care, appropriate clinical PPE must be worn as per clinical enterprise protocols.
Clinical Research Reopening Guidelines

• Re-opening of a given study requires approval by the Department Chair, Division Chief and/or Patient Care Center (PCC) Director, whichever is most appropriate

• The specific area where the study is to re-open must approve, e.g. the cath lab or the cardiology clinic where the study patients will appear

• Assurance that re-opening of the study does not generate a situation in the clinic that impacts patient safety during this time of physical distancing and/or PPE considerations

Link to detailed research reopening guidance:

Link to patient management issues:
https://www.vumc.org/coronavirus/sites/default/files/COVID%20Documents/Guidance%20for%20Clearance%20of%20COVID%20%20%28Patients-v.2.pdf
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Cores and Shared Resources
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Phase 1 Transition

Cores are transitioning to Phase 1 operations throughout May.

Cloth masks must be worn in VUMC public areas including research cores/shared facilities, which are considered public areas.

Users should contact facility managers in advance to plan for core-specific guidance and restrictions.

**Cores may:**
- Reduce onsite staffing to ensure physical distancing > 6ft, which could affect turnaround time
- Prioritize COVID-19 related projects
- Require documentation of Biosafety Officer approval before accepting new projects/samples
- Restrict user access to core lab or equipment, wholly or in part
- Require users to sanitize equipment, workstations before/after use
- Require users to supply their own PPE and adhere to other biosafety requirements as applicable
- Temporarily suspend services in response to capacity constraints


[www.vumc.org/oor/institutional-research-shared-resources-and-core-facilities](http://www.vumc.org/oor/institutional-research-shared-resources-and-core-facilities)
Animal Care and Use Program (ACUP) Roadmap to Reopening Animal Facilities

DAC and IACUC are fully operational (includes animal orders, transfers, husbandry/veterinary support, and all IACUC functions).

Phase One:
• Wear cloth masks in animal facilities unless otherwise directed
• Maintain strict physical distancing and adhere to room capacity limits
• Once implemented, schedule all hoods and procedure rooms via iLab
• Minimize the number of procedures where physical distancing cannot be maintained
• Disinfect all surfaces before and after use

Occupational Health Clinic Support

• Post-exposure monitoring/Contact tracing:
  • Employee exposure monitoring
  • Expanded screening guidelines

• Return to Work process:
  • Exposure guidelines for VUMC Workforce Members

• Support Resources:
  • COVID Wellbeing Navigator
  • Departmental outreach

• Research-related services (Animal Care exams, TB testing, vaccinations, injury care, etc): Ongoing
VEHS Reopening Guidelines for Research

• IBC registration or amendment is required for work with biological specimens from COVID-19 patients (or other materials from SARS-CoV-2)
  • VEHS Biosafety can assist in risk assessment and biocontainment plan and determining required approvals
• COVID-19 recommendations align directly with some regular safe lab practices:
  • Prohibiting sharing equipment that does not need to be shared such as goggles, safety glasses, face shields, lab coats, etc
  • Frequently washing hands including before entering and exiting lab and before consuming food/drink
  • Routinely disinfecting work and break areas
  • Implementing check-in/checkout procedures to monitor use of facilities
  • Monitoring PPE, disinfectant and other supplies to ensure adequate supplies are on hand
  • Reporting signs and symptoms of illness
• Some COVID-19 protection measures need special consideration when applied to a laboratory setting where hazardous materials are used/stored:
  • Physical distancing must be balanced with ensuring that others are aware of your activities in case you need assistance
  • Physical distancing or disposable masks are preferred over cloth masks
• Resources for more information: www.vumc.org/safety