

July 9, 2020

Important message for School of Medicine department heads, associate/assistant deans, division chiefs, center and institute directors, faculty, managers and supervisors (and relevant to all personnel),

Our Occupational and Student Health Offices (as delegated by the Department of Health) are responsible for all communications regarding a COVID-19-positive person on campus. You may learn that someone who reports to you has tested positive for COVID-19, either from the individual directly or from Occupational or Student Health Services. The confidentiality of this information is legally protected and you may not disseminate this information (even in a de-identified form) any further. Inappropriate disclosure of confidential information is a violation of policy and could be subject to sanctions.

Additional guidance:

If a person who reports to you tells you that they have tested positive, you should

- 1) ensure that they do not come to campus or if they are already on campus, that they leave campus immediately, and
- 2) contact Occupational Health or Student Health, as appropriate, regarding next steps.

Occupational/Student health will:

- Interview the infected individual.
- Communicate with the appropriate local public health department.
- Communicate with anyone in the University community who has had a significant exposure with the infected individual regarding their risk and any recommendations for PPE, testing, or quarantine.
- Coordinate with Custodial Services to provide enhanced sanitation of affected areas, if necessary.
- Determine the appropriate next steps and communicate them to the affected individual and to the supervisor.
- Be available to answer questions from you and others who are concerned about their own health.
- Notify the supervisor when the individual is able to return to work.

Contact Information

Student Health: (314) 362-3523 Studenthealthservice@wusm.wustl.edu

Occupational Health: (314) 362-3528 Occupationalhealthservice@wusm.wustl.edu

We do recognize that this is a challenging situation to manage, especially if responsibilities within your group need to be shifted and coordinated with other personnel due to the affected person's absence from work, or if there is enhanced cleaning required within your area of responsibility. These situations are likely to engender questions from you and others, which you may have difficulty answering without sharing the legally protected information. We recommend that you contact Occupational/Student Health for advice, and refer others to Occupation/Student health if they have questions. In addition, we have put together FAQs for supervisors (coronavirus.med.wustl.edu/resources/faqs/faqs-for-supervisors/) and FAQs for personnel (coronavirus.med.wustl.edu/resources/faqs/faqs-for-all-personnel/). These will be updated and posted to our School of Medicine COVID-19 webpage (coronavirus.med.wustl.edu/) as we continue to get more questions.

As a reminder to you and those who you supervise, the majority of COVID-19 transmissions occur when there is personal interaction with an infected person at close range, without masks, and for a significant amount of time (>15 minutes). Therefore, we have implemented requirements for universal face coverings, physical distancing, and screening (<https://coronavirus.med.wustl.edu/items/campus-safety-procedures/>).

Although possible, brief encounters, surface transmission, and residual airborne droplets do not seem to be major factors in transmission. To protect against these less likely events, wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your face, disinfect commonly touched surfaces frequently, and wear a mask in public indoor areas. In addition, because one can't wear a mask when eating or drinking, we are requiring anyone who is eating or drinking to do so in a place where they can maintain 6 ft from others and to wipe down shared surfaces before and after eating. Eating outdoors is recommended whenever possible.

It is very likely that there are asymptomatic people who are infected, but unaware that they are shedding virus, both here on campus and anywhere else. We mandate safety measures for everyone on campus at all times, plus we recommend that our valued personnel – you, our faculty, staff and trainees, follow these measures while off campus as well. It should be noted that both the St. Louis City and County recently issued orders requiring masks in many public places. Careful adherence to that guidance will help reduce the rate of infection in the St. Louis region and at the School of Medicine.

At this point in time, we do not have substantial occupational spread of COVID-19 at the School of Medicine, a testament to how well our safety measures have been working. The few examples of person-to-person spread here on campus have generally occurred when the safety requirements were

not followed, so for the protection of your own health, and the health of people around you, continue to follow our safety requirements.

David H. Perlmutter, MD
Executive Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs and Dean