



COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) UPDATE TO THE JABSOM COMMUNITY
March 9, 2020

Aloha everyone,

As you know, there continues to be heightened awareness of and preparation to prevent, mitigate and address potential exposure and spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (abbreviated as COVID-19 [Coronavirus Disease 2019]) throughout Hawai'i. The situation across the country and internationally is rapidly evolving. On March 8, 2020, the second presumptive positive case was diagnosed in an elderly patient who traveled to the Seattle area. Many uncertainties remain because we do not yet have reliable information about the mode of transmission and associated epidemiology of the virus in the healthy and at-risk populations due to limited testing in the U.S., especially in Hawai'i and in many resource-limited parts of the world.

The JABSOM leadership team continues to work with UH leadership, the State and our health system partners to help **keep our communities safe, ensure continuation of education** and other business operations and to be **good stewards of resources** that will be needed should there be more cases of COVID-19 and community spread in Hawai'i. We, like every other [medical school](#), are very closely monitoring the situation, updating Emergency Operations Plans & Procedures and are developing contingency plans for small group learning, large group activities, clinical skills/longitudinal clinical mentoring and experiences that occur in patient care settings. As you may be aware, several colleges, universities and medical schools have announced changes to their curriculum and Match Day events to keep their students, faculty and staff safe. **Safety is paramount.**

Our medical students, residents, fellows and clinician faculty are front-line providers, regardless of whether they are currently deemed "essential" or "non-essential" personnel in our healthcare facilities' pandemic/emerging infectious disease plans. The impact of contracting COVID-19 (even if minimally symptomatic), has greater and far-reaching implications for the larger Hawai'i community and the entire healthcare system in Hawai'i than for the individual alone. Therefore, **we all**, including our administrative staff and non-clinician faculty and students, must hold ourselves to a higher standard of professional responsibility for [prevention](#), risk-reduction of COVID-19 and, likely, infection mitigation should community spread begin in Hawai'i.

TRAVEL

Numerous questions and concerns remain regarding travel over the next 6 months. While especially relevant for any international travel, including travel to/from the U.S. Affiliated Pacific Island jurisdictions, there are emerging warnings regarding travel to certain areas on the continental U.S. where community spread is rapidly occurring (certain counties in [Washington State](#), [California](#) and other areas). Travel concerns include individual travel, as well as travel by [household members](#) traveling to U.S. CDC-designated [Level 2 or 3 countries](#) and other areas being monitored closely by the [U.S. Department of State](#). We know that Spring Break in all schools is soon upon us, which has every educational institution extremely concerned.

We are adhering to [UH Travel Policies](#), as well as [CDC recommendations for travel](#). We have already canceled some large events and travel for certain medical meetings. We have already canceled International rotations, electives and International Exchange programs.



For those with upcoming planned personal travel outside of Hawai'i, we ask that you do the following:

- For the areas with planned travel, review the relevant State's health department page or the U.S. Department of State/U.S. Embassy pages for updated advisories.
- **Medical students, residents, fellows and clinician faculty: Please inform your supervisors if you are planning personal travel** (including layovers) outside of Hawai'i in the next 5 months. Medical students should notify the Office of Student Affairs. Residents or fellows should notify your Program Administrator and follow other guidelines per Hawaii Residency Program, Inc. Faculty should notify your Department Chairs.
- Other faculty, students and staff: In order to help us lessen risk and help with advanced planning, we strongly suggest notifying your supervisor if you are planning travel for personal reasons.
- Avoid travel or transit to a Level 2 or 3 status country. Seriously reconsider travel (for you or your household members) to locations, including within the U.S., with community spread, or to countries bordering Level 2 or 3 countries or those Level 1 countries (at risk for community spread).
- Please be aware that not all airports currently have rigorous screening measures in place for travelers from high-risk areas.

If you or a household member have recently traveled to a high-risk area or have had close contact¹ with someone who has, please do the following:

- Immediately notify your supervisor, even if you are feeling well. Depending on your specific circumstances at the time, you may be requested to self-quarantine at home for 14 days. While the school and GME programs will do their best to ensure continuity of educational experience, there may be some instances where this is not possible.
 - Trainees: Disruption of your various training requirements for a prolonged period may impact graduation requirements, timing of entry into residency, length of training, eligibility for specialty Board examinations, timing of entry into Fellowships and, therefore, eligibility for licensure and timely credentialing.
- If you feel ill, please call your health provider to inform them of recent travel or contact with those who have recently traveled. Refer to the CDC website for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

If you or a household member tests presumptive positive for COVID-19, you must immediately notify your supervisor. We will follow the [current CDC](#) and Hawai'i State Department of Health recommendations based upon the details of exposure. In general, this will include self-quarantine for 14 days from the time of last exposure. Please note this guidance will be superseded by CDC or Hawai'i State Department of Health guidance for close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 patients or persons under investigation.

OTHER WAYS THAT WE ARE KEEPING OUR JABSOM COMMUNITY SAFE

- Match Day (March 20, 2020):
 - We will be live streaming the Match Day ceremony so that family and friends can join the celebration.
 - On March 6, 2020, we encouraged students to NOT bring elderly or young children to the event. Please note that the CDC defines persons at high risk for developing complications from COVID-

¹ Close contact is defined by the [CDC](#) as a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case or b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)



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- 19 infection as people >65 years old, young children, pregnant women, people who are immunocompromised or who have chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions.
- Although contrary to our usual way of celebrating happy occasions, we are encouraging “air hugs,” “blow kiss,” air “high-fives,” or shakas, fist or elbow bumps or other ways of showing congratulations.
 - If a 4th year student has a sneeze, runny nose, fever or cough, please wear a mask to protect others (or preferably - stay home).
 - Upcoming large events, conferences, meetings and the JABSOM Biomedical Symposium
 - At this time, we are planning to host those events that have not already been cancelled. However, the situation remains fluid and we will continue to re-assess.
 - More frequent cleaning of frequently touched areas and objects in the classrooms, tutorial rooms, bathrooms, stair railing, doors and other “high touch” areas
 - Allowing the glass doors on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor to remain propped open during business hours
 - Making contingency plans for distance learning and remote work should the situation warrant distance learning. UH has updated its page for [Teaching Online During an Emergency](#) – we strongly encourage all faculty and graduate assistants to review this information.
 - Recommending that staff and faculty avoid bringing children to work during Spring Break. We recognize that not everyone has access to childcare and that this may pose a burden on families. However, as we do not have full information on the transmission patterns of COVID-19, it is safer for everyone to keep young children out of JABSOM common space and departmental offices (especially if in a healthcare facility) and clinical learning environments. Please have further discussions with your supervisor if you are unable to find childcare during Spring Break.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Learners in clinical learning environments:
 - On March 5, 2020, we distributed an email and memo to all medical student clerkship directors and others advising them of joint Hawai‘i Pacific Health (HPH) and JABSOM recommendations regarding medical students caring for patients in isolation. The communication contains details intended to keep our learners safe and to conserve and prioritize personal protective equipment (PPE) within HPH facilities.
 - For clinical rotations within Queen’s Health Systems (Punchbowl and QMC-West), their leadership has determined that medical students may not provide direct patient care for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Residents and Fellows may care for suspected cases (with proper supervision and PPE), but may not care for any presumptive positive or positive cases. These guidelines may be updated if the situation evolves.
 - As more cases are suspected or diagnosed in Hawai‘i, please be aware that the recommendations regarding caring for patients receiving any type of isolation (that requires use of PPE) may change. All healthcare facilities, including outpatient sites, are carefully monitoring PPE usage, as the priority must be given to healthcare workers providing direct patient care of those at risk for COVID-19.
 - Medical students, residents and fellows should follow procedures and guidance recommended by the clinical care site. Please contact your rotation supervisor or GME program director if you have any questions.
- Undergraduate and Graduate student courses will be taught per UH Manoa guidelines. Students who are working in research laboratories should adhere to UH Manoa travel recommendations. If you have questions, please see your advisor, graduate chair or Dr. Mariana Gerschenson at gerschen@hawaii.edu or 808-692-1516.



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As a reminder, please continue to practice good sanitation, hygiene and preventive measures.

- Stay home when you're sick with respiratory symptoms (sneeze, cough, shortness of breath) or fever.
 - Please notify your supervisor or course director to discuss options to work or study from home.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve/elbow when you sneeze or cough.
- Practice social distancing (i.e., stand/sit six feet away, no hugs and kisses, etc.).
- Avoid touching your face and especially your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water and for at least 20 seconds.
- If you do not have immediate access to soap and water, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Use any tissue for single use, then dispose of it properly (carry your own bag to store your used tissue rather than placing it on a surface).

Please check your email at least daily to ensure you have the most recent updates regarding your education or workplace advisories.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we work to ensure the health and well-being of our entire community, including the other health professionals we work with and the patients we aim to serve. Stay calm. And wash your hands.

With sincere aloha,

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