

From the Office of the Dean

December 18, 2020

Dear Faculty and Staff (Students and Residents):

The number of COVID cases in our state and nationally has increased substantially and continues to pose a threat to our School and our programs. We continue to monitor the situation and will adjust our operations as needed (based on local and university guidelines).

We recognize that everyone has been careful and vigilant for many months-however with the recent spikes in disease rates we need to continue to remain vigilant in order to keep our preclinical and clinical programs on track, to protect our community and to serve our patients. Your continued commitments to our testing/surveillance programs and good etiquette (**W-Wash** hands, **W-Wear** masks, **W-Watch** your 6 ft spacing).



The Winter Break presents several additional challenges. We recognize everyone is fatigued and the holidays are always a time to gather with friends and family. The Tufts travel guidelines and CDC guidelines (in particular, risks are posed by **travel, large gatherings**-especially indoors) are meant to keep our community safe and to allow for all of us to re-engage in our educational, research and clinical practices in January 2021.

CDC Guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

There is a strong belief that we will start to turn "the corner" in late winter/early spring-this is hopefully one of the last large holiday sacrifices we need to make!.

I thank you for your continued vigilance and sacrifices!

Dean Karimbux.

TESTING PROTOCOLS FOR WINTER BREAK AND SPRING SEMESTER

On 12.18.20 you received the University-wide communication about testing protocols for winter break and the spring semester (please check your e-mail).

Of particular interest to those working in emergency clinics and the January start date:-

Faculty and staff at the School of Dental Medicine and Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine

Due to clinical operations, faculty and staff at the Dental School and Cummings School will be required to receive two negative tests **before** returning to campus after winter break. They will need to arrange their schedules to allow time for this testing. For convenience, or if necessary, Dental School faculty and staff may test on the Medford/Somerville campus.

Availability of surveillance and quarantine testing is subject to the Tufts testing centers' operating hours. For hours of operation, see the [testing calendar](#).

RETURN TO WORK IN JANUARY.

The official winter break ends on January 4th 2021.

REMOTE WORK.

All remote workers will continue in their activities-with an aspiration to move people back on site as the pandemic subsides/vaccines become more prevalent. Please check in with immediate supervisors as the situation develops.

ON-SITE WORK/PROGRAMMING-(CLINICAL ACTIVITIES MAINLY)

Given the uncertainty of the pandemic and local/national exposures that are bound to happen we have decided that there will be **LIMITED clinical activity for the week of January 4-8** (e.g. emergency services and Program specific activities as approved and arranged by Chairs/Program Directors).

FULL CLINICAL activities (as defined by the local guidelines/mandates) will commence on January 11.

Essential workers (faculty and staff) and students/residents are expected to commence some form of "activities" on January 4th. It is expected all will be in the local area-this is not an extra "travel/vacation" week.

Audits certifying testing and the ability to return to full clinical activity will also be conducted.

REMINDER: APRIL TRAVEL/SPRING BREAK

Traditionally our clinics have been open over Spring Breaks. This year there will be **no official spring break**. Clinics will remain open. Preclinical activities/make up academic sessions could also be planned during these weeks.

Students/residents must check in with their Deans/Chairs/Program Directors for specific guidance. Any travel plans/leaves must be approved as per guidelines from your Programs.

Faculty/Staff can continue to use vacation times as per your immediate supervisor/Chairs approval processes.

DEAN'S REFLECTION:

A "shot" heard around the world: and a celebration (muted) of lights.

The health care worker gave a "thumbs up" and smiled nervously as she received the first COVID-19 vaccine in the State. Many similar stories and images have been shared across the country and the globe.

The approval, distribution and use of vaccines has given the world a glimmer of hope in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic- people are starting to see the light at the “end of the tunnel”.

I am curious about how the term “giving a shot” become a common reference for injecting local anesthetics or vaccines. I could not find a reference (growing up in a British colony- Kenya the term “jab” is also commonly used for injections!).

Speaking of “shots”, many who live in Boston or are “transplants” have heard the words “A shot heard around the world”. As a Bostonian I am certainly familiar with Paul Revere (see his association with dentistry <https://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/paul-revere-america's-first-forensic-dentist/>) and the saying “A shot heard around the world”.

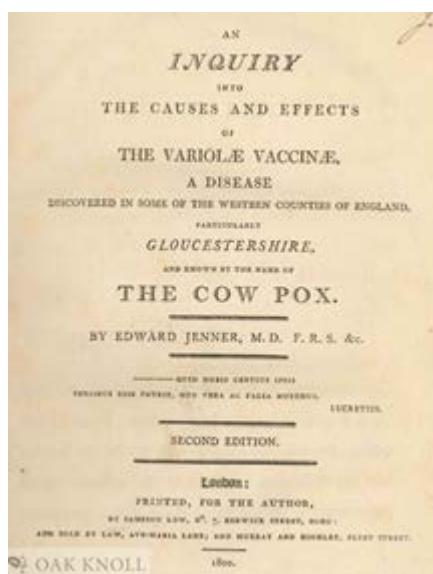
I learned that this term refers to a poem written by Ralph Waldo Emerson. The Poem is called “The Concord Hymn”. Since that time the phrase has also been used in sports and in other historical events.

(<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/patriotsday-shot-heard-round-world/>)

The term “vaccine” also has an interesting historical connotation. Interestingly in the 18th century Edward Jenner (an English physician) wanted to investigate whether there was any truth to the story that milkmaids who got cowpox did not seem to contract small pox. Jenner ended up inoculating an eight-year old boy (a procedure that would not be approved by the Federal Drug Administration-FDA-today!) with material taken from a cowpox sore. After the boy recovered he inoculated the boy with smallpox. Unbelievably “Jenner repeated this process with 22 more lucky folks and published his documentation of it all in 1798, in a slender volume called *An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Variolae Vaccinae*, using the Latin term that charmingly translates as "cow pustules."

The term for vaccine came from vacca the Latin word for “cow”.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/vaccine-the-words-history-aint-pretty>



Fast forward to the current pandemic and we can marvel at how scientific advances have allowed for the development of a new generation of vaccines, a process that shows safety and efficacy of developed vaccines and a regulatory body that weighs the risks and benefits of use.

In a season of giving and joy, humanity hopes that this “shot” will be felt across the world.

As many see the “light at the end of the tunnel” I wish you all a safe and restful break-and all the very best in 2021.

Celebrate safely as you marvel at the many ways that we celebrate “festivals of lights” in these cold dark days https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival_of_Lights.

I look forward to seeing you all back in our clinical and preclinical spaces and in our “zoom” chat windows in 2021!

Dean K.

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