

## From the Office of the Dean

Dear Colleagues,

I realize the COVID-19 situation is changing day-to day and that each change requires changes in our guidelines, policies and procedures.

As many of you know, Governor Baker declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts in order to further prepare for the outbreak of COVID-19, and the World Health Organization declared a pandemic.

We are balancing our clinical, educational and research missions with the health and safety of our community in mind.

We have leadership teams that are meeting daily to monitor the situation, and to modify according to reliable national and local guidelines and to university guidelines. These are the resources that we are referring to:-

- CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>
- Mass DPH. <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- Governor's Office-state of emergency. <https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-591-declaration-of-a-state-of-emergency-to-respond-to-covid-19>
- Tufts University guidelines. <https://emergency.tufts.edu/coronavirus/>

We have established the following teams that report back to our leadership group.

**Clinical Council of Deans/Chairs and Deans** - coordinating team-Dean Karimbux

**Academic Continuity** - DMD/AG graduate class programming, support for faculty with educational technology - Drs. Ramesh, Thompson and Dragan

**Chairs/Program Directors** - Faculty and clinical staff issues. AG Clinic programming.

**Operational Continuity/Staff** - general staff concerns RE university policies/procedures, building and facilities issues, supply lines - EAD Gonthier, Conant

**Clinical Affairs** - daily monitoring of resources above to inform policy. Patient, staff and clinician (faculty, students, residents) guidelines and resources in clinical practice-Deans Hanlon, Ghaffari, Amato

**Clinical Continuity** – Drs. Papageorge and Amato

**Externships/Rotations/Events** - Drs. Nehring, Yered, Kasberg, Thompson

**Research Continuity** - Dr. Kugel

**Student Life/Health** – Dr. Kasberg

## **UPDATES:**

### **CLINICAL OPERATIONS**

**I have decided based on the input of our leadership team to close all of our clinical operations from March 16-29, 2020.**

**We will keep the clinics open for emergency care provided by a clinical continuity team. Details will be provided to faculty, staff, students and patients about this operation.**

I know how concerning this is for all that provide care for our patients. I am however heartened by how many have engaged in ways to help navigate this difficult situation. I know our “people-students, staff and faculty” will work together to insure that all of our programming will at some point in the future return to normal.

### **TUSDM CLINICAL OPERATIONS**

Clinics will be open on Friday March 13<sup>th</sup> for those students that want to see their patients.

If you see your patients please use the standards established for patient screening, please also consider minimalizing aerosol creation.

#### **Plan of action.**

##### **1. Patient Cancellations**

#### **Notification to patients.**

#### **Students/Residents:**

1. Students and residents as primary care providers should call all patients that are scheduled during the time period (March 16-29, 2020) and use the attached script.
2. If patients are asking you any questions that you cannot answer please consult with your PC/Program Directors.

Your patients might also receive e-mails/texts/phone calls about the closure from TUSDM. Updates will be posted to our main web-site page. <https://dental.tufts.edu>

#### **Clinics where students/residents are not primary care providers (recare, Faculty Group Practice etc.):**

Please work with Direct Clinical Supervisors/Chairs/Practice Managers to cancel patients.

##### **1. Continuity of care-emergencies.**

Our emergency clinic will remain open on a limited basis for emergency care during this period.

Our Clinical Continuity team has developed plans and will handle emergencies/continuity of care.

The Deans of Clinical Affairs (Drs. Hanlon, Amato and Ghaffari) and the Executive Associate Dean Mark Gonthier will be communicating with Supervisors and Staff about needed support for emergency/contingency clinical services and plans (including call center responses).

Chairs of Departments will also field Department specific issues related to the closure.

The impact of this decision on student/resident clinical progress towards graduation will also be monitored and modified. If there are concerns of an immediate nature please send them to your class leadership group.

### **EXTERNAL CLINICAL ACTIVITIES**

External rotations and externships etc. will be cancelled for the period March 16-29, 2020. Drs. Kasberg/Thompson/Nehring/Yered will inform site directors of this change. Please contact them for any issues that arise.

The impact of this decision on student clinical progress towards graduation will also be monitored and modified.

#### **Clinic Re-opening.**

Our leadership team will monitor the national and local environment/guidelines during the two-week period and determine the type of opening/date of opening. We will communicate this to our community as soon as we can.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS**

Chairs/Deans and supervisors will work with EAD Gonthier to determine staff needs based on essential services and university guidelines.

#### **Resources have been sent out for staff/employers**

<https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/coronavirus-frequently-asked-hr-questions-for-staff-employees/>

<https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/coronavirus-frequently-asked-hr-questions-for-supervisors/>

Preparations for each unit to be able to work remotely should continue (hardware, connectivity, access to information). Please work with supervisors for guidance.

### **ACADEMIC PLANS (MARCH 25-April 30 2020)**

1. Didactic programming (DMD/AG). In person classes will stop from March 25-April 30, 2020. Course Directors and Program Directors have been asked to develop online resources (lecture capture, PowerPoints, etc.) with lesson plans/focus on key points/consolidate information where possible. Some Course Directors are going “live” as soon as possible. Plans for exams during this period are also being developed. Our team in Academic Affairs will be leading these efforts.
2. Preclinical Programming. Preclinical programming will continue with modifications that will be communicated by Academic Affairs/Course Directors. For now we anticipate that we can maintain these classes with standard infection control/universal precautions, “disaggregation strategies”, consolidation and shortening of programs.

Deans Kasberg and Thompson have met with Class Leadership groups to obtain student feedback and modifications will continue to be made based on this feedback.

Program Directors will meet with residents to obtain their feedback.

### **RESEARCH OPERATIONS**

The university had published guidelines regarding research operations (<https://announcements.tufts.edu/announcement/march-6-covid-19-update-travel-guidance-contingency-planning-and-research-guidance>). Please refer to the guidelines. Any research regarding clinical trials (in the clinical trial center or for student research requirements) should follow all clinical protocols as outlined.

### **TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

Please stay up to date with the University travel guidelines <https://announcements.tufts.edu/announcement/travel-guidance-related-covid-19-coronavirus> including the Local and National restrictions on travel.

I have every confidence in the abilities of our staff, students, residents, faculty and our leadership group to manage through this unprecedented situation. Thank you for what you do on a daily basis.

Sincerely,  
Dean Nadeem Karimbux, DMD, MMSc

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