

June 1, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As the COVID-19 epidemic in NYC/NYS subsides and assuming that it will continue to be contained by the measures taken by NYS, NYC, OMH, NYP, CUMC we will begin to resume clinical, educational, and Research functions that have been suspended these past 10+ weeks beginning in June. The precise date will be forthcoming when we have further word from the Governor, Mayor and University.

In order to be able to do so it is essential that we follow guidelines for COVID safety strictly. In preparation for this we have developed policies and procedures for all activities in the department and the staff, trainees and faculty groups. What follows is a description of these that was prepared by a task force of department leadership representing the different components of the department and Institute. I want to thank them for their diligence in developing this plan and particularly thank Margaret Hamilton for her efforts in assembling the components and drafting the document.

Commencing the reactivation will be like *“putting our toe in the water to see if it’s safe to go back into the water”* meaning that we will evaluate the consequences of the reactivation in terms of how well we adhere to the guidelines, if there is any increase in COVID cases and how the university and city’s reactivation process goes. Thus, while we hope that this will be the first step in a sequence of steps towards normalization, we will actively be monitoring conditions and making adjustments in our policies and procedures accordingly. The guidelines for the reactivation process follow. If you have any questions, please contact your Area, Division or Service Chiefs.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in this crisis and dedication to our mission.



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## COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Columbia Psychiatry and NYSPI Re-Entry

### General

- Working from offsite/home will continue to be preferred in order to reduce the number of individuals in the workplace and to minimize travel and possible exposure.
- Staggered work days and/or arrival times will help us reduce crowding in lobbies and elevators and improve safety. The twelve Research Areas, Clinical Services, Education and Training, and Administration should each review and coordinate work schedules of their staff to ensure physical distancing onsite.
- Parking – the garage will be available on a first come/first served basis to all staff who have been approved for onsite work by the leader of their mission (research [Simpson], clinical [Attia], education and training [Arbuckle], Administration [Taraborrelli]).

### Building Entry

- Starting June 15<sup>th</sup> all staff coming onsite to NYSPI that day will be asked to complete an online screening questionnaire before arriving to attest that they do not have COVID19 symptoms. This is intended to help staff remember to self-monitor. The screener will be sent every morning by NYSPI email and completion will be audited to ensure adherence.
- Building Entry for Staff and Faculty – only access points will be via the Kolb building (@40 Haven Ave) and the NYSPI parking garage. All employees will be funneled into a single file to facilitate use of thermal scan temperature reader. Be prepared for some waiting in order to enter the building safely.
- Building Entry for Research Participants – Research participants and clinical patients may enter using either Kolb or Pardes (@1051 Riverside) building entrances but must be met by a research staff member (or clinical program staff) in order to enter. Staff will be responsible for screening their patients/participants, including temperature check using hand-held device, and will escort patients/participants within the building for scheduled services.
- Building Entry at other sites at the medical center and university will be as per that site's protocol.

### Infection Control/PPE – Guidelines

- PPE will be provided as indicated for work tasks
- Some PPE remains difficult to procure because of supply chain issues and cost. Therefore, employees are asked to remain understanding that the department will do the best it can to supply PPE that is guideline-based, but will not be able to supply all categories of PPE and will not be able to supply ad-lib the PPE that it does possess.
- Surgical Masks are the PPE that is indicated for use in most interpersonal interactions in our psychiatric research setting.
- N95 masks, gowns, gloves, face shields are indicated when working in close or prolonged contact with suspected or known COVID patients.
- Research groups who wish to use more PPE than that provided by the department may purchase additional supply. Information regarding recommended sources for purchasing reliable PPE will be made available in a separate communication.
- Please consult infection control team ([infectioncontrol@nyspi.columbia.edu](mailto:infectioncontrol@nyspi.columbia.edu)) for guideline-based recommendations regarding appropriate PPE for specific circumstances.
- If you are sick – STAY HOME
- Face covering. Consistent with CDC, NYS, and NYC guidelines, face covering that covers the mouth and nose will be required in all public areas and shared workspaces. Face covering will not be required in private offices when the door is shut and there is no other occupant. Staff at entrances will be checking to see that all who enter have a face covering, and if not, will provide a single surgical mask

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- Gloves: should only be used in appropriate clinical or research settings, not generally around the site – hand washing is preferred
- Scrubs: Clinical personnel on inpatient units and at the Washington Heights Community Service locations (where patients spend extended periods and we want to take an extra step to keep outside germs away from patients) are offered clean scrubs for daily use. Laundering scrubs will be the responsibility of the staff.
  - Scrubs will be provided to staff who are not on clinical services upon request until August 1 pending availability. Continued availability after August 1 will be determined based on the Covid-19 situation.
  - Other staff may wear scrubs (not provided from central supply) if they wish, but are not required to do so; all staff will be reminded to launder clothes frequently.
  - If you don't wear scrubs, it is encouraged that you have a change of clothes for work only.
- Hand sanitizer: Dispensers will be present at building entrances and signage will ask that all individuals sanitize hands upon building entry. They will also be available around all buildings.
- Physical distancing. At least six feet of space is needed to be safe and should be observed in the workplace to the extent possible. Elevators indicate max occupancy with south elevators in Pardes having a 3 person maximum and the north elevators in Pardes having a 2 person maximum. Please be prepared for longer than usual wait times for elevators and consider taking the stairs.
- Meetings and meeting size. Technology should be used to replace in-person meetings even if participants are on site. Meetings of no more than a few people can only take place in spaces that allow physical distancing.
- Café will be open in Kolb lobby and will directly serve all items, no self-service.

### **Environment**

- Building preparation –The Environmental services team completed in mid-May a thorough cleaning and disinfection project for the entire NYSPI building. This process will be repeated intermittently as re-entry proceeds. There will be frequent cleaning of doorknobs, elevator buttons and restrooms
- Signage – Stickers or signs will be developed to indicate that a given space has been cleaned; Also, individual employees will be able to indicate to environmental services that they do not request entry by environmental service personnel.
- Ongoing maintenance – Environmental services team has been trained on disinfection as well as general cleaning and will be conducting thorough cleaning of every common area twice daily.
- Individual offices – Individual staff will be issued a cleaning product for their workstation and are encouraged to wipe down their own work surfaces (i.e., keyboards, phones, chairs, doorknobs, etc.) every morning before starting work, and following every meeting with another person.
- Waiting areas, gathering spaces and meeting rooms: will be reconfigured to allow for physical distancing. Furniture in order to optimize social distancing and signage will be created to remind people about the need to stand and sit at distances apart. Waiting rooms will be utilized minimally and consistently and regularly sanitized.
- Visitor Policy. Access for non-employees to any Psychiatry space will be strictly limited. At the start of re-entry, there will continue to be no visitors to inpatient units. This policy will be reviewed intermittently, in consultation with OMH.
- Business travel. Business travel will continue to be restricted, as nearly all business meetings can be conducted via remote technology.

### **Communication**

- Each Division (Research, Clinical, Education and Training, Administration) will distribute their own specific guidelines to its members.
- Town Halls will be held weekly on Wednesday at 11am through July 2020.
- Town Halls will be held every other week starting in August 2020.

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- These **General Re-Entry Guidelines** will be updated and distributed every two weeks.
- Research: The VC for Research meets regularly with all Area Leaders and Research Infrastructure and sends monthly emails to all PIs. All area leaders are responsible for disseminating communication to the faculty and staff in their areas.

## **Education and Training**

### Clinical Rotations for residents and fellows:

As of July 1, the aim is to have all clinical services back to full resident staffing. Some modifications to anticipated plans may be necessary in order to adjust for clinical services that continue to be disrupted by COVID-19.

- residents will be on-site or working remotely based on the clinical services they are rotating on
- focus is making sure residents meet training that were disrupted by re-deployment. This is being addressed on a case-by-case basis
- PIRC (PI resident clinic) will continue telehealth services through to at least October 1st and residents in PIRC will work remotely if possible. This will be re-assessed in early September based upon COVID-19 rates and institutional recommendations.

### Didactics

- All resident didactics and process groups will be conducted remotely over zoom.

### On-Boarding of new residents

- Almost all orientation activities will be conducted remotely.
- No delays to the PGY1 residents starting as of July 1<sup>st</sup> are anticipated

### Interview Season

- Based upon recommendations from the AAMC and a joint statement between AADPRT and ADMSEP all resident and fellowship interviews will be conducted remotely:

### Medical Students

- Contingent upon the clinical services availability, it is anticipated that CC4's may return for sub-I's as early as June 1 and the clinical clerkships will resume on June 29

## **Clinical Services at NYSPI**

### Inpatient at NYSPI

- COVID screening – Every clinical and research admission must include screening for COVID19 immediately prior to admission (using nasal swab PCR testing). Whenever possible, patients should present to CUIMC CPEP for pre-admission screening. For research participants who will not be presenting to CPEP prior to NYSPI admission, COVID screening will need to be conducted by research group within three days prior to admission.
- Census – Unit census will be capped in order to limit crowding. Maximal census will be as follows:
  - 4S – 18 persons
  - 5S – 16 persons
  - 4C – 8 persons
- Group size – Therapeutic activities will maintain limited numbers (<6) and will respect social distancing; Off-unit activities (e.g., visits to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor patient park) will be limited to include no more than 3 patients accompanied by one staff person.
- Masks – All patients and study participants on inpatient units are asked to wear a mask/face covering at all times.
- Other PPE – Gowns, face masks, face shields and gloves will be worn for all contacts with known COVID+ patients as well as for contacts with individuals who are formally identified as being under investigation for possible COVID19 illness (PUI). PPE aside from masks, and gloves needed for contact procedures, will not be worn during other clinical interactions.

### Outpatient at NYSPI

#### *PIRC, WHCS and Research Clinics*

- Virtual visits – Virtual visits using teleconferencing should be considered whenever possible. Groups/clinics should prepare by receiving IRB approvals and anything else needed for these sessions to occur using remote technologies. Clinics will continue to review case lists and use technology available to patients. Staff density reduction plans will continue to encourage remote work when possible, and as OMH allows.
- In person visits – Clinics should all have a COVID19 screening procedure in addition to the procedures conducted at building entrance. This should include questions about fever and symptoms of viral illness. Participants should wear masks/face coverings and be asked to use hand sanitizer for all in-person visits. Social distancing should be observed as much as possible during in-person visits, but it is acknowledged that many offices at NYSPI make it difficult to maintain a full 6 foot distance during an interaction with a patient and some procedures (e.g., physical exam) make social distancing impossible. Environmental services will clean exam rooms and patient waiting room areas twice daily. Individual clinics and research programs will need to wipe down (with Super Sani-Cloth wipes) work areas, seating, and other surfaces touched by patients and staff after every use.
- Testing – Clinics may have individual policies about COVID19 testing requirements for outpatients. All required testing associated with research participation should be approved by IRB.
- Scheduling. Scheduling should be done to avoid multiple patients arriving at the same time and needing shared waiting areas, will need to coordinate with other clinics in same vicinity. Pre-screening for symptoms is being performed. Patients are also being advised of visitor limitations and mask requirements. Staff are encouraged to collect administrative and clinical information at the time of scheduling and to do as much as possible paperless.
- Arrival. Protocols are being changed so that patients should be asked to arrive on schedule and should be seen immediately. Patient and accompanying person (only if absolutely necessary) need to be masked, and there can be no more than one accompanying person per patient. Patient time in the waiting room is being minimized.
- Practice layout. Lobbies, elevators, waiting rooms, and reception areas must accommodate physical distancing of six feet and markings will be placed on floors to facilitate spacing.
- PPE. Both clinicians and patients should wear masks and use hand sanitizer. All areas will use enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- If any out-patients are suspected or known COVID+, they should not be allowed to enter the buildings.

### Outpatient at Columbia Doctors sites

- Continue to use video visits for most outpatient services at present
- Continuation of specific services that need to be provided onsite such as long-term injections, Ketamine, ECT and any patient in which clinical picture requires in person assessment
- Groups will remain virtual until further notice
- PPE, scheduling, social distancing, waiting rooms, cleaning and other protocols will be following the parameters and directives established by ColumbiaDoctors and NY State.
- Gradual transition to more on-site services over time following all the parameters above and moderated by number of new Covid-19 cases in NYC.
  - Services to be provided on-site in phase two include: initial consultations, neuropsychological testing, procedural based care and higher-risk patients requiring in person assessment.

### **Research at Columbia Psychiatry**

#### For ALL researchers:

1. Research is starting in Stages (Stage 1: ~25% of pre-COVID onsite activity; Stage 2: ~40-60% of pre-COVID activity; Stage 3: the new normal. Stage 1 will start in June for basic research and

July for clinical research. How long each stage lasts will depend on the infection rate in the NYC, the governor's orders, and CU guidelines).

2. Only essential personnel or personnel approved to return to work during Stage 1 by their Area leaders (as indicated in the ramp-up plan submitted to and approved by the VC for Research) will be allowed in the building. Only faculty/staff who **must** be onsite during Stage 1 should come and staggered work schedules are recommended to ensure physical distancing. No volunteers or externs are permitted on-site during Stage 1.
3. All researchers must follow NYSPI infection guidelines (INCLUDING physical distancing, hand hygiene, self-monitoring and PPE requirements, see above).
4. Research Cores (either basic or clinical) need to develop a plan for limiting activity and ensuring infection guidelines are met. Shared calendars for users to sign up are recommended.

#### Clinical Research at NYSPI: Stage 1 Guidelines

- **No human research onsite can start until the IRB has reviewed the protocol and its safety plan and given permission.**
- PIs are asked to move all research to remote where possible (seeking IRB approval first)
- Research participants should only come on-site if absolutely necessary (e.g., for procedures).
- No volunteers/externs on-site during Stage 1.
- Clinical research teams will screen their participants for COVID symptoms (night before and day of onsite visit, documenting this in the chart), and escort them in and out of the building.
- COVID/COVID-like symptoms in participants will be reported to IRB.

#### Non-Clinical Research at NYSPI: Stage 1 Guidelines

- Avoid crowding in elevators and elevator lobbies.
- Do not mix general PPE (e.g. the face mask that needs to be worn when in public and around the NYSPI building when distancing is not possible) with lab-specific PPE that is required for lab procedures (gloves, lab coat, gown/face mask). People are responsible for coming to work with their own masks (as per the governor's order). However, lab-specific PPE is to be provided by the labs to their faculty and staff.
- Gloves should not be worn in public elevators. Freight elevators must be used to transport hazardous materials (wearing of gloves permitted)
- NYSPI has adopted a low density, scheduled, lab work environment following a 7-day working week to ensure the most efficient usage of space that allows for maximum physical distancing.
- Each Area/Division (or Core Facilities) is responsible for establishing online calendars or comparable means allowing staff to schedule experiments in non-private laboratory settings or shared common rooms (e.g., lunch areas)

#### **Testing for COVID-19**

All employees are encouraged to contact their personal physicians with specific questions about their own health. We provide the info below for your information and reference.

##### **PCR testing**

- NYP in collaboration with Columbia University Irving Medical Center offers testing for COVID-19. Diagnostic PCR/nasopharyngeal (nose) swab test is available to health care personnel affiliated with CUIMC, including those with symptoms of COVID-19, and those who are symptom-free and have been in contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19. The PCR test detects the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19. Please note that this testing is not recommended for symptom-free HCP who have not been in contact with someone with COVID-19 at work or at home.

##### **HOW TO ACCESS TESTS**

- **PCR Testing**

HCP who believe they have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 but are symptom-free should call the Workforce Health and Safety COVID hotline at 646-697-9470 to arrange

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an appointment for testing. *Tests will be available only by appointment through Workforce Health and Safety.* At this time, PCR testing for symptom-free HCP will be available one-time only unless the HCP begins to show symptoms of COVID-19.

At the time of appointment scheduling, it is important for HCP to indicate that they are requesting PCR testing for symptom-free employees. HCPs presenting to testing sites for their appointment should practice social distancing and wear a protective mask.

HCP who test positive for the virus will be advised to stay home and isolate for fourteen (currently OMH is 14 days / NYP is 10 days) days from the date of the test (not the date of the results). Results can take from 24-48 hours or longer to turn around.

- **Serologic Testing**
  - Serologic (blood) testing for antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19 is also available to health care personnel (HCP) affiliated with CUIMC. It is recommended that serology testing take place more than 14 days following resolution of all COVID 19 symptoms since it may take 3-4 weeks for antibody production to occur.
  - HCP who would like to be tested should call the Workforce Health and Safety COVID hotline at 646-697-9470 to arrange an appointment for testing; no virtual visit will be required before serology testing. Tests will be available only by appointment through the Workforce Health and Safety Hotline, and appointment slots are subject to availability at each NYP location. At this time, serologic testing for symptom-free HCP will be available only once.
  - When scheduling an appointment, it is important for HCP to indicate that they are requesting serologic testing for employees. As always, HCP presenting to testing sites for their appointment should practice social distancing and wear a protective mask. Generally, results will be available within three to five days but may take longer depending on testing capacity.
  - Please note a positive serology test does not mean that a person is immune and protected from getting re-infected with SARS-CoV-2. We still have much to learn about how long antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 can be found in the blood after infection.
- PCR and Serology testing for antibodies is also available through the Department of Health. To schedule an appointment, call the NYS DOH hotline at 888-364-3065.