03/22/2020

To: BMC Research Community
From: BMC Research Operations

Good Afternoon -

We hope you are all well.

As a reminder of the emails sent 3/13 by the IRB in regards to Human Subjects Research, and Research Operations on 3/16 asking everyone to minimize laboratory activity to the greatest extent possible, **Boston Medical Center** is asking labs to plan for the potential stoppage of research should a further required shut down of operations occur.

Similar to the request from Boston University, the purpose of this email is:

1. To ask PIs to provide an inventory of work that is continuing on campus
2. To provide information about what activities would be critical to maintaining the capabilities of the lab if it is necessary to cease in-person-in-the-laboratory work.

   Inventory of Ongoing Work: We are asking all PIs to let their department chairs know by Wednesday, March 25, what activity is still occurring on campus and which personnel are considered essential to the ongoing work. As outlined in our earlier communications, the following principles underlie the designation of activities currently considered essential:

   - Long-term experiments and activities that would generate significant financial and data loss if not completed; this includes work to maintain critical samples and animal populations
   - Activity that if discontinued would pose a safety hazard
   - Activity to maintain critical equipment in facilities and labs
   - COVID-19 related activity that has a timeline for deployment that could address the current crisis
   - Human Subjects Research: no human subjects should be tested unless there are very special circumstances. Please refer to the FAQs posted here: http://www.bumc.bu.edu/irb/faqs-impact-of-covid-19-on-human-subjects-research/

Non Essential justifications include:

- It will take substantial time to get the lab up and running again
- Experimental results are needed for a paper submission or another critical deadline

Please be prepared for these criteria to become more restrictive, depending upon developments.

Preparation for stoppage of in-person-in-the-laboratory work.

- Indicate on the form what activities they believe are critical to maintaining the capabilities of their lab if in-person-in-the-laboratory work is **required** to cease.
- In the case of stoppage, access to labs would only be available for essential personnel who perform critical procedures, processes or equipment management that require regular personnel attention to maintain laboratory viability (e.g. liquid nitrogen tank filling, animal support, maintaining shared computational equipment).
- Where the activity goes beyond simple equipment or sample maintenance the request should include:
    - A justification of the essential activity
    - A physical distancing plan
    - A contingency plan.

  The information you provide will be used to notify your departmental administrator about who these individuals are.

Research Personnel:

Unless their presence is required for an essential role, trainees (including PhD students and post-doctoral researchers) should work remotely. Please continue charging personnel salaries to grants as normal. Research Operations is monitoring awarding agency guidance and will be contacting departments where after-the-fact changes may be necessary. We have also been working with research sponsors to ensure that we continue to operate in a compliant and appropriate manner.

Staff in Environmental Health & Safety and the Animal Science Center, who are defined as essential personnel, have robust continuity programs to support the campus during this time. Additionally, the units of the Research Operations, the Institutional Review Board and Research Compliance, are fully functional using remote protocols. Departments, Research Operations, Compliance and Environmental Health & Safety will work together to determine how best to continue the indicated critical activities.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly or any of your Research Operations contacts for anything you need.

Thank you,

Grace Cashman, Senior Director of Research Administration
660 Harrison Ave | Gambro Building 235 | Boston, MA 02118
P. 617.414.2628| Grace.Cashman@BMC.org

3/16/2020

To: BMC Research Community
From: BMC Research Operations

To Our Research Community:

We are writing as a follow-up to our message of March 13th in regards to Human subjects Research Human Subjects, and the email from Dean Antman yesterday. Please, start preparing your laboratory and research staff, if you have not already, to minimize the impact of disruptions related to COVID-19,

Given the evolving situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are attempting to limit the rate of spread of disease and protect our community as best we can, while limiting the loss of critical research resources and momentum. At this point, we are asking everyone to plan to **minimize lab activity to the greatest extent possible**, and to plan for this level of minimal activity to be ongoing for potentially many weeks. The measures outlined below should be in place by 5:00 pm on **Thursday, March 19**. Our major goal at this time is to minimize social interactions, as well as the density of lab staff in research space where possible.

Obviously**,** COVID-19 research needs to continue, but please ramp down the number of people in your laboratories, as well. This will require a unit-by unit, project-by-project determination and conversation with your manager. Physical presence should not be required when participation is possible digitally. The goal is to promote social distancing as broadly as possible and we are asking researchers to do the following:

- Ensure that any work that can be done remotely is done off campus
- Delay or stop any work that can be stopped
- Limit the work done on campus to long-term experiments and activities that would generate significant financial and data loss if not completed; this includes work to maintain critical samples and animal populations
- Reduce the density in laboratories to 3 or fewer essential personnel
- Hold lab meetings remotely

For human subjects research and as communicated earlier, no human subjects should be tested unless there are very special circumstances. Please refer to the FAQs posted here:
http://www.bumc.bu.edu/irb/faqs-impact-of-covid-19-on-human-subjects-research/

Please make sure to pay particular attention to BMCs COVID-19 Travel Guidance:
https://www.bmc.org/covid-19-information-employees/travel-guidance

Please stay up to date on all BMC covid-19 updates https://www.bmc.org/covid-19-information-employees

We will continue to keep you updated, and send out updates and FAQs as we have them.Thank you,

Research Operations