

5/13 All Hands Research Institute Town Hall: Q&A with Leadership

The questions of this Q&A concerned Research Institute (1) ramp up in light of COVID-19 as well as (2) taking questions from the community.

1. RESEARCH RAMP UP PLAN

Bev Davidson – Wet Lab Research

- Representatives from all major departments with a large footprint in wet research buildings have contributed to this ramp up plan. The plan institutes best practices for returning to wet lab research.
- Official guidelines/documentation will be released Monday, May 18.
- Ramp up at 25% for wet lab side will start Tuesday, May 26. This means 25 percent of your lab staff (including the PI) can be in the space at any one time, while practicing physical distancing.
- Overarching guiding principles:
 - **Safety:** Ramp up in a nested fashion, beginning at the level of the PI, then the PI developing the plan for the lab, then the lab's interaction with the floor, etc. This will happen gradually
 - **Flexibility:** We must be ready to ramp up and pivot back if the situation calls for that.
 - **Guidelines for PI's:**
 - PI's will ensure where possible, researchers work from home (i.e. data analysis, lab meetings, etc. can be done remotely) and be considerate about AWA arrangements.
 - Staff should work one-on-one with manager/PI about timing their return to work.
 - If staff were on Talent Marketplace, bring the staff off that pool, if they are ready to return to the wet lab research.
 - All research staff will take an e-Research training module before coming back to learn things like the proper way of wearing mask, which mask to wear, how often to replace mask.
 - Start thinking about what your lab might need – ordering resources, tools, reagents, etc.
 - Start considering how to best communicate with lab members, and schedule them to come back to work (i.e. Google calendars, Slack, etc.)
 - Make sure biosafety and PPE resources are up and running in the lab.
 - **Return to research is a reverse of ramp-down but in a slower fashion. Be thoughtful and safe!**

*Remember – if you have any sort of illness – you must stay home. Contact tracing and testing will be employed following the hospital's guidelines. Call the COVID-19 Hotline with any concerns about symptoms or exposure: 267-426-3000 or 800-722-7112

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Richard Aplenc: Clinical Research/ Dry Lab Research

- We will start relaxing restrictions on clinical research, and want this relaxation to be as in sync with the wet lab as possible.
- Working to develop clear guidance and support to be ready by Monday, May 18, in one document with wet lab research. Guidelines will parallel those of wet lab:
 - Anyone who can do their research remotely should do that. Clinical research PI's should also have their meetings virtually.
 - Dry bench personnel density guidelines will parallel those of wet lab. (i.e.: When wet lab goes to 25% in person permissible work, this will also be true for clinical side.)
 - Same guidelines regarding PI's individual management of staff's safety, social distancing, potential contact for COVID-19 exposure.
- Ramp up will be PI-based. It is the responsibility of the PI to put into place a plan to manage infection risk for their staff. In discussion with Infectious Disease colleagues, the risk for infection can be managed appropriately with PPE and social distancing.
- Which groups will come back first?
 - (1) Research recruitment that happens in the context of a clinical visit (tentatively, May 26).
 - (2) Research visit that happens as an isolated research visit — subject is coming just for that interaction. (This will start when Philadelphia and surrounding counties move into the “Yellow” zone, hopefully early June)
 - (3) Healthy subject research will happen when Philadelphia and surrounding counties move into “Green” zone.

Bev Davidson

Research Cores:

- Those Cores that are part of the ramp up will be fully staffed. Paula Oliver will work on guidelines for those Cores; these will be coming out on Monday, May 18, as well to ensure flexible work hours.

2. TAKING QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Jeff Pennington

Questions:

- **What consideration will be provided for employees who have kids not in school or daycare, while also juggling remote work?**

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- *CHOP is not going to pay for daycare, but there is ultimate flexibility in working with employees to ensure children are well taken care of, through flexible AWA arrangements, more considerations.*

Michelle Lewis

Updates from Research Administration:

- 100% of team is working remotely.
- Pre-Award Office: Successful in submitting grant proposals remotely to-date. We anticipate seeing a good number of grant proposals to submit for upcoming deadlines. Please submit proposals with as much advance notice as possible (particularly for the upcoming June 5th deadline) as we anticipate that the staff will continue to work remotely past June 5th (big grant deadline).
- Post-Award office: We acknowledge that the rollout of the time & effort (T&E) reports a few weeks ago were done so prematurely. Prior to releasing the correct and updated reports T&E reports a job aid will be disseminated in advance to provide useful guidance on how to navigate completing T&E reports in Workday.
- Creative Services: Launched a web presence on the Research Institute website where you can get all kinds of information that will be relevant to the research community, including COVID-19 news stories, announcements, as well as a new link for COVID-19-specific funding opportunities. Individuals are scouring different websites to create this resource currently available on the Research website.

Questions:

- **AWA: What about administration?**
 - *The longer that people work remotely, we'll encourage that. Folks should be prepared to be in this situation throughout the summer. There will be a pilot being tested over the summer specifically with DBHI (and will also be tested with staff on 17th floor of Roberts) to explore the idea of rotating staff by extending work from home options while allowing on-site staff to share and rotate work stations. Specific details on how this will work in practice is still underway (including process of disinfecting shared space, devising a work schedule for on-site teams versus remote teams, etc.).*
 - *Currently, the priority is to get wet and dry lab research ramped up.*
- **Many questions about guidance from virtual CHOP Town Hall, in particular – how do these guidelines apply to research?**
 - **Salary Support:** *Just like the main hospital, the Research Institute will continue to support personnel and administration whose work is location-critical, and provide them with salary support through June 30th. The requirement is that if you seek salary support, staff members must register in Talent Marketplace. (Close to 150 people in RI*

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- have signed up for salary support and the Talent Marketplace.)*
- **Turnover/Employees Leaving Position:** *Before posting a job, have discussion with leadership to see if we can fill that role with existing personnel.*
 - **Hiring freeze, unless they're hard to fill:** *If position is funded by a grant, that position can be posted; you can recruit, only ask is you delay the start date until at least research is expected to start up again.*
 - **Will new budgeted FY21 FTE's be delayed?** *If you're looking to bring on new FY21 FTE's, we don't have any information about COVID-19 impact on the finances of the Research Institute yet, so we are not in a position at this time to answer questions about new positions.*
 - **Merit increases:** *If you're earning over \$70k, irrespective of how you're paid (i.e. grant) you will not be entitled to a merit (to be consistent with guidance previously disseminated at the enterprise town halls.*
 - **Travel:** *If a grant pays for it, can I still travel? It's about stopping the spread. If you have a grant or internal funds and wish to travel between July 1 and December 31, 2020, you will still need to get permission from Bryan Wolf to travel. Please do not email Bryan right now to request permission to travel! We will devise a streamlined way to operationalize the submission of these requests for Bryan's review and consideration.*

Maxine Johnson

Questions:

- **Is there any news on promotions that have been approved but have not taken effect?**
 - *If there is a promotion already in the works before announcements, you can still move forward with that.*
- **Should we be cashing out PPL with benefit options?**
 - *Yes, cash out your PPL. It's an option for you – we're not mandating it. So, if you want to, you can cash out up to 200 hours as long as you keep 80 hours in the bank. (5/13 was last day to do that.)*
- **Mandatory PPL?**
 - *We have not put a process in place as of yet, so there's nothing solidified. It's one of the things we're looking to do beginning FY21. More to come, if we get to that.*
- **Clarity regarding Talent Marketplace – how to utilize it?**
 - *It is for temporary needs that could be months-long. Also, Talent Marketplace is not where we would post any permanent positions. If you have a need for a temporary*

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assignment, utilize the talent marketplace.

- **If you have engaged employees working at 100%, do they still need to sign up for the Marketplace?**
 - *No. It's utilized only for those who don't have 100% effort.*
- **How do we re-vamp on a hiring freeze?**
 - *If there's a position that's unique (requires a specialized skillset) and hard-to-fill you can get approval to post and recruit into that role for grant-funded positions. Internally funded research positions (e.g., IDF, SPF, etc.) should be posted in the Talent Marketplace to assess if there is internal talent to fill that role. In the event that no qualified candidates are available, contact the Talent Acquisition team for guidance on how to get approved to post the position and open a requisition.*
- **Students, NTP's: We do not want to utilize students in roles that our existing employees could potentially do. There has been an influx of exceptions and requests.**
 - *We don't want to have a student come in when we have a CHOP employee receiving salary support who can do the work.*
 - *We will revisit Work-Study students in the Fall, but right now we won't commit keeping them on the books beyond the Spring.*
 - *Undergraduate students: You can onboard them onto the program if they're 100% virtual, supported by a program solely meant to support that student.*
 - *Graduate students (Master, PhD-level, Med students): The grad students should be able to come back to the wet labs after 5/26.*

Richard Aplenc

Questions:

- **When will research teams be able to re-engage families for research studies?**
 - *There are several tiers – (1) research recruitment that happens in the context of a clinical visit. Research visits of this nature will be permissible starting with the resumption of wet bench research (tentatively, May 26)*
 - *(2) Next level of research recruitment is a research visit that happens as a research-only visit outside of a clinical encounter. (This will start when Philadelphia and surrounding counties move into the "Yellow" zone, hopefully early June) Research visits that were previously scheduled but cancelled will happen first. New research visits will follow subsequently on a time frame to be determined.*
 - *(3) Healthy subject research will happen when Philadelphia and surround counties move into 'Green' zone.*

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- **Can research staff talk to families and patients in person in the setting of a clinical visit?**
 - *As of May 26, research discussions in the context of a clinical visit may occur*
- **Can research staff start calling/contacting families regarding visits?**
 - *Research visit scheduling can begin once that research visit may take place. For example, scheduling for an in-person research visit in a clinical context can occur after May 26. Research visit scheduling for previously cancelled in-person research visits may occur once previously cancelled research visits may occur.*

Matthew Hodgson

Updates:

- Slides with the information below and additional details are available [here](#).
- Investigational Drug Service is open for usual operations. Relocated to the 4th floor of the hospital. For those working remotely, it's important to update your sponsors.
- Monitoring visits: During the “Red” phase, there continue to be no on-site monitoring activities allowed. When we move into the “Yellow” phase, monitoring visits that are time-sensitive and critical will be permitted, with physical distancing guidelines in mind.
- IRB: The IRB is prioritizing their review of in-person contact requests, COVID-19 research, and permitted research with funding-related timeline. They have reviewed 200+ requests to continue research with in-person visits. As we begin to resume certain types of research, they'll assist investigators as needed.
- Research Safety, Shipping Core, and IBC:
 - Research Safety remains location-critical so they have been onsite and are available as needed.
 - Shipping Core has been providing service to research community by shipping study drugs to participants and will continue to do that as needed until subjects are able to safely return to CHOP for study visits.
 - How to coordinate external monitoring visits – for monitors who can't get on site to review records, how can we facilitate that? On the upcoming slides provided to Creative Services, there are a number of ways we can do that, such as making PDF copies of study records or using CHOP-managed services like Google Drive, Citrix Share File and share these with external monitors that way.

Zev Sunleaf

Updates:

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- OTT and Office of Contracts have moved to a new website for submission of invention disclosures and contract requests; find links on those office web pages with additional information about how to submit contract requests.
- Will be sending out teaching materials and assigning people to individual departments.

Questions:

- **Will education assistance program continue?**
 - *It's still ongoing; considered an important program, so no current plan to change that.*
- **Incentive plan payouts: Is it different compared to the hospital?**
 - *Because all of it's still tied to the same overall budget as the hospital, and it's likely the hospital's incentives will not be paid out, the same will be for the Research Institute.*
- **Furloughs vs. layoffs; salary freezes vs. layoffs:**
 - *All of these are on the table, nothing set in stone. We'll know more as we move forward, but the priority is to keep people. Furloughs are being looked at before layoffs. Salary cuts and freezes will be on table as well to try to avoid layoffs if possible.*