Responding to a history-making global pandemic requires innovation and ingenuity, but most importantly it demands total commitment on the part of the UF Health team. Our health care providers and staff have stepped up, answering the call to help and heal with expertise and the caring spirit they are known for.

Please visit the UF Health’s webpage, https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org, for resources and more details.

UF Research also highlights additional COVID-19 related projects on the Explore site: http://explore.research.ufl.edu/uf-covid-19-research-expertise.html

UF Health staff and researchers are collaborating more than ever, during this time of uncertainty:

- **UF Infectious disease teams in Gainesville, Jacksonville and Central Florida** are tirelessly responding around-the-clock to the call for help, lending their expertise and addressing many facets of our response to this extraordinary situation. Last week, we rolled out in-house testing capabilities, which greatly speeds the delivery of results for UF Health patients. We now have the capability to run several hundred tests daily with the capacity for significantly more, limited only by reagent availability, which remains in short supply nationally.

- UF has also created a diversity of platforms along with our UF Health Shands Hospital Laboratories lead by Mary Reeves and her team, allowing for additional scaling of testing and potentially shorter turn-around times. It took nothing less than a herculean effort by Dr. Michael J. Clare-Salzler, chair of the department of pathology, immunology and laboratory medicine, and his remarkable team as well as the teams at UF Health Shands Laboratories to get to this point.

- Dr. Glenn Morris and his team of researchers at the UF Emerging Pathogens Institute, who were the first to initiate testing for COVID-19 at UF as part of an epidemiological protocol, continue to work around the clock in order to ramp up testing even further.

- Our experts at UF Health Pathology Laboratories and the Emerging Pathogens Institute are working 24/7 to process clinical and research tests as we work to optimize timely turnaround of results and to help advance our research mission, in an effort to learn more about COVID-19 and how it spreads in the community, even potentially among those without symptoms.

- **Open Source Ventilator Project**: This open source project has been created to address predicted ventilator shortage worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic and host open source contribution. The UF College of Medicine’s Center for Safety, Simulation and Advanced Learning Technologies has started an open-source ventilator project using common household items like PVC pipes and sprinkler valves to address the growing need for these vital machines. https://simulation.health.ufl.edu/technology-development/open-source-ventilator-project/

- **Epidemiologic Study** – More than 100 volunteer students and faculty from the College of Medicine, School of Physician Assistant Studies and the College of Nursing visited The Villages to begin a project that will screen symptomatic people in the community and begin a critical epidemiologic study of an at-risk population. They will evaluate 400 to 500 people a day for five days. https://ufhealth.org/news/2020/uf-health-working-villages-and-state-officials-rapidly-ramp-coronavirus-testing
In addition, about 30 faculty members and M.P.H. students from the College of Public Health and Health Professions have volunteered through a state task force on contact tracing and are out in the community working with Department of Health officials on this initiative.

3D Printing of N95 Masks - The UF College of Engineering has offered its 3D printing technology and design capabilities to partner with UF Health in producing inexpensive ventilators (working prototype completed) and are starting on a project to print N95 masks. Other areas of the university community have stepped up, with the Research and Academic Center in Lake Nona providing additional N95 masks, CAPRs and other PPE and the College of Veterinary Medicine providing collection kits for testing.

We have launched a massive telehealth initiative in Gainesville, and continue to see UF Health Jacksonville’s Virtual Visit program help meet the needs of screening and caring for patients. Almost 1,000 telehealth visits are occurring daily at UF Health facilities, with a new dental service starting tomorrow and mental health services for faculty and staff coming online next week.

Coronavirus and Parkinson’s Disease— Facebook Live talk with UF’s Dr. Michael Okun and his colleague, Dr. Fred Southwick. https://www.parkinson.org/blog/tips/Coronavirus

The Poison Control Center, located on the UF Health Jacksonville Downtown campus is now operating as the call center for the Florida Department of Health. Additionally, our Operations Hub and incident command centers in Gainesville, Jacksonville and Central Florida are a bee hive of activity, putting in an incredible number of hours each day of the week to rapidly address operational and communications needs and preparations.

The Office of Clinical Research, our IRB and a UF COVID-19 Clinical Trial Group are standing up a rapid response group to facilitate COVID-19 clinical trials implementation without compromising limited clinical care resources. Our first COVID-19 Clinical Study using Sarilumab (an IL-6 receptor blocker) was approved today, with many more under development. UF research facilities in Lake Nona are testing new antiviral treatments for COVID-19, while our clinical research teams are beginning clinical trials for patients admitted to our facilities.

The UF College of Pharmacy has repurposed some of its call center activities for emergency management services and to help UF Health operations triage patient calls. In addition, their pharmacists are making reagents that are in critical shortage for UF Health Pathology Laboratories to allow UF Health to keep its testing capabilities online.

Engaging the elderly while social distancing: During the short video below, leaders from the University of Florida’s Center for OCD, Anxiety & Related Disorders discuss different methods to stay connected in the absence of in-person visits. https://ufhealth.org/news/2020/engaging-elderly-while-social-distancing

Identifying unhealthy anxiety during the coronavirus crisis: Experts at the University of Florida’s Center for OCD, Anxiety & Related Disorders discuss how to know if you or a loved one are experiencing unhealthy levels of anxiety and offer tips to manage it. - https://ufhealth.org/news/2020/identifying-unhealthy-anxiety-during-coronavirus-crisis
• Certain compounds may block coronavirus from cells, UF Health researcher finds: https://ufhealth.org/news/2020/certain-compounds-may-block-coronavirus-cells-uf-health-researcher-finds

• Arts in Medicine - AIM has been adapting delivery of services to tech-based formats so we can continue to deliver safe and effective programming. Social distancing does not mean social disconnection. Artists in residence are creating kits filled with visual art material with step by step how to instructions that nurses can give to patients. Our mission remains the same, to use the arts to help others make sense of their circumstances and provide was to use creatively as a coping mechanism. This experience is teaching us that we are capable of delivering these services using tech driven platforms that reach a wider audience and have a broader impact inside and outside of our health system. https://www.facebook.com/ShandsArtsinMedicine/?__tn__=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARAusPs_r9GaEmLdKwKEZrX2TTyZ0X3P669qWJ7XQi1W6BH-rAJXV1x8wIYY0Bulm33D2YUNsjADyXYM

• Dr. Stephen Munger of the UF Center for Smell and Taste is about to publish a piece in The Conversation about news that many patients who test positive for COVID-19 are reporting new symptoms: the loss of their senses of smell and taste.

• Study shows limits of travel bans in controlling new coronavirus spread, The findings by an international team of infectious disease transmission experts, including Ira Longini, Ph.D., a professor of biostatistics at the University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions and the UF College of Medicine, appear today in Science. https://ufhealth.org/news/2020/study-shows-limits-travel-bans-controlling-new-coronavirus-spread

• UF Alumni who are in the health care workforce (many whose practices are closed) have volunteered to be put to work at UF Health, if the need arises.

• Finally, with so much stress and anxiety in the community these days, the director of the wellness programs at the UF College of Medicine is offering timely tips on our COVID-19 website, https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/, on how to give your mind and soul some much-needed downtime.

Our physicians, nurses, staff and other health care first responders mobilize our response through our emergency departments, operating rooms and ICUs across our three major health campuses and in our outpatient practices. They are the first face patients see and they have stepped up in a big way as we ready for the increasing number of cases we are likely to see in the coming days.

To assist with UF Health’s COVID-19 efforts, please consider a gift to the COVID-19 Fund at UF Health. Funds will be used to address the most critical needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as determined in the sole discretion of the University of Florida Senior Vice President for Health Affairs. These needs may include, but are not limited to, research, delivery of testing and treatment, epidemiological studies, vaccine development, prevention efforts, studies and remediation related to social and environmental effects, and any other activity related to coronavirus and COVID-19, as well as any mutations and related illnesses. Expenditures may cover salaries, equipment and supplies, travel, and other costs incurred in connection with the purpose, and may be used in any college or unit of the University as determined by the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs.

Donate here: https://giving.ufhealth.org/covid19/