Date: March 15, 2020

The Daily Digest - GW Clinical Enterprise

This email is intended to serve as a digest of all messaging for our clinical faculty, students, and staff. We will send this email at the close of business each day, as we are managing daily operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have feedback, please feel free to send to SMHSNews@gwu.edu.

The GW Medical Faculty Associates Updates

1. COVID-19 Update
With the COVID-19 pandemic evolving rapidly, our priority remains the health and safety of our patients and our caregivers - from providers to staff. As a medical enterprise, we at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the GW Medical Faculty Associates and the GW Hospital, are working in lock-step to minimize the risk of exposure and spread of this virus to our patients and providers. As expected since healthcare providers are on the frontlines of this pandemic, we want to make you aware that we now have providers who have tested positive for COVID-19. At this time, the providers affected are in self-isolation and are doing well.

"In each case, we have followed the appropriate protocols of testing, self-isolation, and have contacted those who may have been exposed to them including patients and staff," said Barbara L. Bass, MD, Vice President for Health Affairs, dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, and CEO of the GW Medical Faculty Associates. "We will be launching telehealth options for patients and rescheduling elective procedures and visits to make sure that we can keep our GW community, our patients, and all the people in our great capital region healthy and safe."

"Our goal is to continue to provide the highest quality care to our patients at our clinics and within our hospital but also to protect our caregivers" said Kimberly Russo, CEO
and Managing Director of the GW Hospital. "We will continue to take actions to optimize the care of our hospitalized patients and support our community. Current efforts include restricting visitors to our facility, increasing COVID-19 testing capability, and postponing all upcoming elective surgeries for the near term in an effort to protect our patients and to limit the rate of spread of infection within the community."

2. Operational memo regarding surgeries and procedures - see below:

Anton N. Sidawy, MD, MPH, FACS Chair, Department of Surgery
Chief Physician Executive GW Medical Faculty Associates

Barbara L. Bass, MD, FACS, VPHA and Dean, GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Chief Executive Officer, GW Medical Faculty Associates

Kimberly Russo, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director GW Hospital

RE: Operational memo regarding surgeries and procedures

DATE: March 15, 2020

To address the COVID-19 pandemic, the leadership teams of GW MFA, GW SMHS, and GW Hospital have been working together over the last two months to ensure an effective GW response to this novel infectious disease. We have facilitated measures to limit the spread of the virus by advocating social distancing, providing for hand hygiene and personal protective equipment for healthcare providers and patients, and in the last few days with enhanced testing of persons under investigation.

We know that COVID-19 has now reached our city with documented community spread. We are poised to respond to this evolving threat by adopting more aggressive exposure mitigation strategies. The evidence and available guidance for this response has indeed changed on a nearly hourly basis over the last 36 hours.

Therefore, in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19, and to preserve resources in anticipation of escalating needs, we have made the decision to change the hospital procedure schedule as follows for the period of Monday March 16 - Friday March 20:

All appropriate elective and non-urgent procedures during this period will be rescheduled to a later to-be-determined date. Urgent cases, those in which delay would potentially be harmful to the patient, will NOT be rescheduled during this period. Emergency access and support of all types will continue.

Decisions regarding the following week will be made as soon as possible pending the experience over the next few days. It is anticipated that required services from anesthesiology, nursing, and other clinical and support services will be sufficient for urgent and emergent care in the coming week.
Lists of scheduled surgeries and procedures were provided to the respective chair of each clinical department to categorize, by level of urgency, each attending surgeon’s scheduled procedures for next week. Once designated, the administrative staff will notify all impacted patients and ask them to contact their surgeon’s office to reschedule their care.

Given the fluid nature of this evolving situation, we anticipate there could be further changes to this intended plan in the coming days. Should an inflection point be evident, further restriction of services will be required. We are carefully tracking cases, supplies, healthcare workforce, testing results and all other parameters on an hourly basis.

We recognize that uncertainty about the future of this epidemic is causing profound disruption in our personal lives, as well as fear of what the future may bring for you and your loved ones.

We are grateful for your commitment to serve our patients in these anxious times to the best of your ability. We will do our best to support you and greatly appreciate your engagement as we adjust on a daily basis to next steps.

Please also note that colleagues and friends will contract this disease, we all need to be extra vigilant to keep all such information private and confidential.

**The George Washington University Hospital Update**

1. New Screening Measures & Limiting Hospital Access Points

As the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly evolves, GW Hospital continues to take preventative measures to protect our patients, visitors and healthcare workers from exposure. Beginning tomorrow morning, March 16th, to minimize the risk of exposure and spread of the virus to our patients, staff and faculty, we will begin implementing screening of all individuals accessing the hospital as well as restricting entry and exit points within the hospital. The main lobby valet side entrance will serve as the only point of entry into the hospital, staff and faculty will not be permitted to enter via the Emergency Department. All approved visitors, staff, and faculty will be screened for fever, cough and/or flu-like symptoms at the main lobby entrance prior to entering the facility. If any of these symptoms are exhibited, entry into the facility will NOT be permitted.

All staff must show their badge upon entry and should continually have their badge on their person at all times. Exiting the hospital will be limited to the main lobby Metro side for all visitors, staff and faculty. In addition to hospital staff and security, there will be signs posted at other entrances including the Emergency Department to direct visitors, staff and faculty to the designated access points. These efforts are being implemented to optimize the care of our hospitalized patients and support our
community while keeping you all safe. Please remember to be kind to one another and support our GW family during this uncertain time.

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**The GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences Update**

1. **Suspended Medical Student Clinical Rotations**

In this COVID-19 pandemic, we have been weighing many factors and incorporating new information as it becomes available. In doing so the GW SMHS has decided to SUSPEND MEDICAL STUDENT CLINICAL ROTATIONS as of Monday March 16, 2020 (tomorrow). As the healthcare workforce gears up and our clinical sites are modifying clinical care (i.e. canceling electives procedures and visits, scaling up for COVID-19 patients), we ultimately remain concerned for your health and safety, in addition to that of the healthcare providers and community at large, and are taking this step accordingly.

GW SMHS will re-assess this decision on a weekly basis. More information will be forthcoming.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during these challenging times. Be well.

Terry Kind, MD, MPH
Associate Dean for Clinical Education

Richard Simons, MD
Senior Associate Dean for MD Programs

Barbara L. Bass, MD
VPHA for Health Affairs and Dean, GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences
CEO, The GW Medical Faculty Associates

2. **Match Day Update**

Match Day is probably one of the most important days of your MD program. We know how hard you have worked and how much you are looking forward to celebrating the next step in your career. We have worked hard to preserve as much of Match Day as possible, however the current public health crisis requires extreme measures. After careful consideration we have decided NOT to hold an in-person Match Day celebration.
We understand how disappointing this must be to you, as it is to the entire faculty, staff and administration. The Dean's Office staff remain committed to getting your match results to you by email at noon on Friday, March 20th. The formal email from the NRMP is still scheduled at 1:00pm. We are very proud of you and all you have accomplished and though distance will separate us, we will raise high in celebration of each of you.

Barbara L. Bass, MD  
Vice President for Health Affairs  
Dean, GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences  
CEO, The GW Medical Faculty Associates

3. Update on Step 1  
Class of 2022:  
We hope this message finds you well despite the extra stresses that COVID-19 may be bringing during your dedicated step study time. We wanted to reach out to let you know that we are monitoring the situation and will be here to help you through this time. As we are sure you are realizing, the situation in the country right now is fluid and evolving. SMHS is working hard to ensure our students can continue to meet educational priorities while also attending to student safety and wellbeing.

A small number of Prometric Testing Centers, particularly in areas of high disease activity, have temporarily closed. [prometric.com] Please monitor the status of your current testing center in case you need to move your exam to a different site or change your test date. Students should feel free to contact Dean Goldberg, or your career advisory Dean, at any time if they run into difficulty with their test center or for any other concern(s). As of today, our plans for FCP and your rotations (end of April) have not changed; however, as things are evolving daily, we do not know what April 13th or beyond will bring. We will keep your class informed if anything changes. (Remember to check this daily email from "SMHS Communications - Subject: (Date) Updates for MD Classes" which comes out at the end of each workday, sometimes weekends) We also want to hold an optional WebEx session for you to call-in, reconnect, and answer what questions we can in these uncertain times. Please be on the lookout for a message with that call-in information. In addition, look for other WebEx opportunities to learn more about COVID-19 that we are in the process of setting up for our students.

And as we said before, if you ever needed a reminder about why you are on this journey, take a look around at the health care providers who are playing such an important and crucial role in these challenging times.

Hope you and your loved ones are well.  
Hang in there- you are almost there! And, we will get through this together.  
Best wishes,  
Your Student Affairs and Curricular Deans