To the UW Medicine Community:

Dear Colleagues,

The past week has been a challenging time for our faculty, staff, patients and the entire community as we see the rising numbers of individuals exposed to or infected with COVID-19. The response from our UW Medicine community has been courageous and inspiring. We are very grateful for your hard work and dedication.

To help protect our workforce and students, UW Medicine is recommending meeting restrictions and telecommunication options to minimize the possibility of infection. The University of Washington is also recommending limited in-person classroom instruction. Those recommendations are outlined below. There are additional messages pending that will help guide how we continue to provide quality care to our patients, exceptional training for our students and trainees, and how we protect our healthcare professionals, staff and students from possible exposure.

New information will be posted to The Huddle on a regular basis. You may also receive these messages via your entity’s Infolines. Our goal is to reach as many people as possible with important information that is critical to all employees.

Thank you for all of your excellent work.

Sincerely,

Paul G. Ramsey, M.D.
CEO, UW Medicine
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs and
Dean of the School of Medicine,
University of Washington

Lisa Brandenburg
President, UW Medicine Hospitals & Clinics
Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Washington

Timothy H. Dellit, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer, UW Medicine
Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Washington
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Meeting Restrictions and Telecommuting Options:

In an effort to slow the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), UW Medicine is encouraging all faculty and staff to consider cancelling or postponing large group meetings and other non-essential meetings. We further encourage telecommute options for employees whose work can be performed from home. Additionally, the University of Washington is recommending that all classroom instruction be done remotely.

Telecommute: In accordance with Public Health-Seattle King County guidance, we encourage supervisors to provide telework options to employees or students whose job duties can be performed remotely without hampering operations. Supervisors have maximum flexibility to implement this through April 3, 2020. You can find telecommute resources here.

Meetings: All large group meetings and gatherings should be cancelled or conducted via teleconference whenever possible through April 3, 2020. Please work with your supervisors and use good judgment about which meetings are essential and limit the number of people present where possible. If your meeting is critical, please consider convening your meeting via Zoom.

UW-IT has made UW Zoom Pro free to all current faculty, staff and students. Any member of the UW community in these categories may now schedule and host Zoom meetings of unlimited duration. For HIPAA compliance, UW Medicine employees should be sure to access Zoom by signing into the HIPAA UW Zoom option.

If you must convene or attend a meeting in person, please use the following precautions:

• Stay home, and urge participants to stay home if they are sick; participants who are sick should also contact their care provider via phone or telehealth.
• Practice social distancing during your meeting; allow space between you and your colleagues (one empty chair between participants in the meeting).
• Practice good personal hygiene; wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, and don’t touch your face with unwashed hands.

Classroom Teaching: The University of Washington is recommending all in-person classroom instruction to take place remotely starting Monday, March 9, through March 20, 2020. For the remainder of the quarter, instructors are asked to conduct classes and/or exams remotely, as possible, until the quarter concludes on March 20. In some cases, when the nature of a class is not suited for remote delivery, other options, including submitting grades based on work conducted to this point, may be used. Faculty and graduate students will receive additional information in a follow-up message from Provost Mark Richards and Faculty Senate Chair Joseph Janes. The University’s goal is to make sure that students’ academic work is fairly recognized and that any disruption does not present a disadvantage to their future academic progress, including admission to their preferred major in the months or years to come.