

## Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC



Dear USC Dental Community:

As we draw ever closer to resuming dental operations at Ostrow, I wanted to take some time to really lay out for everyone the multi-faceted measures we have taken to ensure that we all come back to a safe and healthy educational environment.

Over the past several months, I have been working with our coronavirus task force — composed of Drs. Yang Chai, Winston Chee (chair), Nam Cho, Sillas Duarte, Joyce Galligan, Roseann Mulligan, Mahvash Navazesh, Rafael Roges, Doug Solow and Ms. Jill Yoshimi — and with feedback from our advanced program directors, group practice directors, leadership forum and Associated Student Body to fundamentally re-imagine the way we operate within our spaces in a manner that meets guidance set forth by the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization as well as state and local health departments.

### **Physical Upgrades**

In all, we have spent, or received via thoughtful donations, a large amount of money to “retrofit” the building for use during this global pandemic. This includes the installation of 29 HEPA air scrubbers — 19 distributed throughout the second-floor clinic and 10 throughout our two Sim Labs. The lower level and first-floor clinic’s HVAC system uses 100 percent fresh air from outside, so it doesn’t need to be equipped with these filters.

We have also acquired more than 50 mobile extra-oral suction units that sit near the patient and have the potential to further enhance absorption of aerosolized particles. These units will be selectively deployed throughout our

clinics. Additionally, we have purchased fogging units that spray a fine disinfectant mist throughout our learning spaces before use. You'll remember the video I shared last week of Jackson using this machine to clean the Guggenheim Auditorium. Finally, the school has secured an adequate inventory of PPE for all students, residents, staff and faculty; numerous hand-sanitizing stations; and plexiglass barriers to protect our patient services representatives and dispensary workers.

These purchases alone are not enough to protect us from the coronavirus. We will necessarily need to adjust the way we engage within our environment. First, before you can return to campus, there are two trainings you are required to take. The first is [Ostrow specific](#), and I've mentioned it many times. Without taking that training, you will not be permitted in our facilities. The university is requiring a second training, located on [Trojan Learn](#), to be able to return to campus. See below for which Trojan Learn title you should complete, based on your roles and responsibilities.

- **Staff:** *"Health, Hygiene and Safety for Employees"*
- **Student Researchers:** *"Health Hygiene and Safety for Students in Research Environments"*
- **Research Faculty and Staff:** *"Health, Hygiene and Safety for Employees in Research Environments"*
- **Faculty:** *"Health, Hygiene and Safety for Faculty" (Launches July 15)*

## **Entering the Building**

Once you've taken the trainings and have been notified by your supervisor that you are free to return, you will notice that nearly every aspect of life at the Norris Dental Science Center has changed. Faculty and staff will enter through the building's southeast corner (look for the red tent). There, your temperature will be checked, and you will be asked a series of questions regarding any potential exposure to Covid or if you are experiencing any Covid-like symptoms. If you do not feel well, please do not come into the school.

Our patients will enter through the main patient entrance on 34th Street. They will have been called 48 hours in advance and asked questions about any potential exposure to Covid or the experience of any Covid-like symptoms. The day before their first aerosol-generating treatment, patients will be tested once

for Covid for free. Obviously, anyone who tests positive will be asked to reschedule their appointment. At their checkpoint, they will have their temperatures taken and will be asked again about any potential exposure to Covid. Once they check in, the patient services representative will notify the student that their patient has arrived. A limited number of patients will be allowed in the waiting area while others will be asked to line up outside. All patients will be required to wear a face mask the duration of their time in the building except during treatment.

For those faculty and staff located at the Dental Faculty Practice (Engemann Student Health Center) or the Center for Craniofacial Molecular Biology (Health Sciences Campus), please contact your supervisor if you are not yet familiar with health and safety measures put in place for your respective buildings.

### **Patient Care**

The provision of patient care will also look a lot different. We will physically distance our used operatories and stagger appointments. All clinical staff, including students, will be required to wear a bouffant cap, eye protection, an N95 mask, gown, gloves and shoe covers. Our patients will be provided pre-procedural mouth rinses of 1.5 percent hydrogen peroxide or 0.2 percent povidone-iodine. When possible, we will eliminate sonic or ultrasonic instrumentation and implement extraoral radiographs, rubber dams, high-volume evacuators and resorbable sutures to avoid having the patient come in for another appointment.

We will also use four-handed dentistry, with one student providing care and the other acting as an assistant for one patient and then switching roles for the next. This not only helps safely speed up procedures, it helps ensure we are providing the highest quality dentistry.

Should a coronavirus case appear in our community, we are fully prepared to use contact tracing, including our own records as well as USC's tracking app, to discover all those individuals who might have been exposed. All individuals will be tested and required to self-quarantine.

### **Outside of the Clinic**

As we've mentioned, all PBL case lectures and seminars will be conducted remotely for the foreseeable future. In our Sim Labs, we will split up our DDS classes into four groups to allow for physical distancing. That means, in the morning, a portion of the class will be in the Sim Lab; and in the afternoon, another portion of the class, with an hour in between each group. We will limit the items taken inside the Sim Lab to just those you need, encourage students not to share smartphones or computers and ensure that once our students' work is done that they leave right away, without needless loitering.

Of course, all of these measures — meant to contribute to a safe and healthy environment in which we all can thrive — are only as good as the behavior of our community members outside the building. Everyone wants to get back to normalcy, where masks and social distancing are a far-off memory. The only way for us to get there is to adhere to all the CDC guidelines when you're out in the world. Be a responsible global citizen, and do your part to stop the spread of coronavirus. While your health might be strong enough to withstand the coronavirus, there's no guarantee that those you might come in contact with have the same healthy immune system. We must pull together like never before and be there for our society's most vulnerable populations.

I cannot wait to see you once again soon.

As always, stay safe, healthy and fight on!

*Avishai*

Avishai Sadan, DMD, MBA

Dean

G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery

Professor of Dentistry

[Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Updates](#)



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