



July 17, 2020

*This weekly research re-engagement update is being sent to U-M faculty and staff with active sponsored research, including laboratory, studio, human and field research. Please share this information with your colleagues.*

Dear faculty and research staff,

The University of Michigan has adopted a vision for serving the world through research and scholarship. Over the past four months, I am extremely impressed at how researchers across all three U-M campuses have fully embraced this vision by using their expertise to address the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic.

With more than 320 COVID-related projects and over 400 publications focused on the novel coronavirus, U-M researchers are playing a critical role as we all work together to find solutions to this pandemic. As we continue to safely re-engage research and scholarship, I encourage you to review the important information below.

#### **A comprehensive map for U-M research across phases of the pandemic**

- We must continue to work and research in this new manner for the foreseeable future. When and how we adjust our work will be dictated by the transmission of the virus in our community, but we will strive to increase the productivity of our research teams under the constraints we have for public health. To aid in these uncertain times, research leadership have developed a [Research Activation Map](#) that outlines how U-M re-engagement strategies align with the [MI Safe Start Plan](#). This comprehensive roadmap, linked to the state public health phases, will guide our research work for future ramp up and (if needed) ramp down, based on COVID-19 virus transmission.

#### **Building density requirements allow for more researchers starting July 20**

- Based on the success of how researchers have embraced this new way of working, we have now firmly established a culture of safety in regard to COVID-19 transmission. Research laboratories across U-M have operated at **30 percent density** on any given shift to protect employees' health and safety, and have implemented strict shift segregation. Beginning **July 20**, labs can increase to **45 percent density** if social

distancing can be maintained on any given shift as indicated above in our [Research Activation Map](#). And to aid experiments that are not conducive to a single shift and researchers that need more flexibility, teams can swap personnel between shifts where needed in order to schedule or optimize productivity.

- Our shared commitment to public health practices has allowed us to open our labs safely and now to increase density, but our research community must remain vigilant, practice social distancing, maintain workspaces with at least 144/square feet per person, and wear face coverings in order to reduce COVID-19 transmission. Please work directly with your research associate deans if you have any further questions about building density requirements. In this time of fluid plans, if the state of Michigan regresses to Phase 3, labs will revert back to operating at 30 percent density and implementing shift segregation requirements.

### **Guidance for re-engaging undergraduate students for in-person laboratory research**

- The governor's executive order related to laboratory research, updated July 10, now allows for undergraduate students to safely resume activity. U-M research leadership developed guidance for schools, colleges and units as they determine how to safely re-engage undergraduate researchers in stages. We will expand the guidance when our fall academic semester begins and undergraduates have completed an orderly return to campus.
  - Re-engagement of undergraduates at this point will initially be limited to:
    - Senior students who already have research experience in the same laboratory, and reside in the local Ann Arbor area.
  - It is important to note that undergraduate students:
    - Are subject to the same building capacity limits as other researchers.
    - Must participate in the same symptom monitoring and building intake processes as other researchers.
    - Must complete the EHS return-to-research training module.
    - May not be left alone in research spaces.
    - May not be compelled by PIs to resume research and scholarship.

### **New federal OMB guidance impacts charging of idled research employees to federal grants**

- In response to the recently released [Office of Management and Budget Memo M-20-26](#), the university has determined that, effective **June 17, 2020**, the salaries, wages and benefits of individuals who have been idled due to a lack of available work may no longer be charged to federal awards (this also applies to awards from non-federal sponsors that are subcontracting federal funds to U-M). Please note that employees may still use any hours remaining in their COVID-19 emergency paid time off bank for other allowable purposes. We recognize the late-breaking manner in which this federal guidance was issued and interpreted requires a retroactive response for some employees' charges. To aid with this, Sponsored Programs will be reaching out directly

to units with payroll charges that need to be corrected. If you have any further questions, please contact Bryan Van Sickle at [bvsickle@umich.edu](mailto:bvsickle@umich.edu).

### Human research updates

- Studies that have been approved for activation under **Tier 0, Tier 1 and now Tier 2** are able to safely resume in-person human research at this time. The university will continue to monitor virus transmission rates, and how those rates impact our status under the [MI Safe Start Plan](#), to determine when studies approved for activation under **Tier 3** can safely resume. As noted above, if the state of Michigan reverts to safe start Phase 3, we will only allow Tier 0 and 1 studies to continue.
- 1,691 individuals have completed the human research training module via My LINC.
- 376 human research activation protocols have already been approved. 400 protocols are in the review process, and PIs should soon receive updates regarding their submissions.
- Resources for human research activation:
  - [Human research activation plan](#)
  - [Human research activation checklist](#)
  - [Human research activation tier flowchart](#)
  - [Human research activation tier framework](#)
  - [Human research training module](#)
  - [Research re-engagement webpage](#) (FAQs, guiding principles, activation procedures and committees, etc.)
    - OVPR is reorganizing its human research FAQs so that researchers can more readily access important information. Please refer back to the research re-engagement webpage on July 20 for updated FAQs.
  - [Return-to-work training attestation for human research](#)

### Public health metrics for research re-engagement

- Research employees entering buildings (July 9-15): 4,275/weekday
- 74 total buildings ramped up for research and scholarship
- Environment, Health and Safety laboratory space visits (May 21-July 15): 10,895
- Supply of masks, sanitizer and disinfectant: Nonclinical PPE remains sufficient. Please refer to [Procurement Services' COVID-19 Supplies webpage](#) for more information.
- Researchers to date who displayed symptoms and tested **positive** for COVID-19: 0
- Researchers to date who displayed symptoms and tested **negative** for COVID-19: 3

Stay safe and healthy, and research onward.

Rebecca Cunningham, M.D.

Vice President for Research

William G. Barsan Collegiate Professor of Emergency Medicine