

## Faculty of Health Sciences and Hospital-based research

Dear research faculty, trainees, and staff,

The rapidly evolving situation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Ontario government's declaration of a state of emergency, has led to numerous discussions regarding research activities within the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), at Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) and Providence Care Centre (PCC), and more generally at Queen's.

The collective decision is to support the continuation of research activities recognizing that the health and well-being of the research community, its participants, and the general population is of paramount importance. Appropriate social distancing (maintain a distance of two metres from others; avoid large groups) and good hand hygiene will subtly minimize the rate of infection within our community and should be practiced within the research environment.

We encourage you to regularly monitor the [VPR COVID-19 website](#) for updated information. We will bring you up to date and provide directives and information relevant to our collective research mission.

1. Each principal investigator engaged in lab-based, patient-oriented / clinical research and/or clinical trials is asked to provide a brief summary of their research plan for the foreseeable future (e.g., ongoing operation, maintenance of essential lab activities, pausing operations, and a contingency plan for what the lab will do if there is a full shut down) to the Office of the Vice-Dean Research, FHS / VP Health Sciences Research, KHSC / President & CEO of KGHRI ([gladys.smith@queensu.ca](mailto:gladys.smith@queensu.ca)) by Wednesday, 25 March 2020. This information will allow for ongoing tracking of research operations within the FHS and at KHSC and PCC.
2. Continue ongoing research studies, but consideration should be given to initiating new experiments, studies or trials, particularly with how fluid the situation is currently.
3. Where possible, research-related activities should be undertaken remotely from home. Trainees are encouraged to consult with supervisors for the contingency plan.
4. Research groups must develop plans to delay and cease existing research activities within university and hospital facilities on short notice. Plans should be made for waste disposal and essential services, facilities and infrastructure needed to maintain research samples should be noted.
5. For those performing animal-based research, please regularly check the [VPR COVID-19 website](#). Relevant information includes:
  - There will be a decreased staff presence within the Animal Care Facility;
  - Animal breeding should be maintained to a minimum to sustain transgenic lines;
  - Ongoing studies can be completed, but no new studies are to be started;

- Entry to the Animal Care Facility by researchers should be minimized;
  - Animal orders and import/export of rodent lines are currently suspended.
6. Some supporting essential services associated with research operations within FHS will be maintained, including liquid nitrogen and solvent supply in Botterell Hall. Access to the DBMS supply centre, which is a self-serve operation that stocks many basic lab supplies, will remain open. Access to the supply centre is available by signing out the key from the DBMS main office (563 Botterell Hall) during regular office hours. However, the DBMS Biobar will be closed. We ask research personnel not to place orders through the Biobar portal that was set up by the companies until further notice. Rather, researchers should order their supplies and have the company ship directly to their labs.
  7. Important updates for researchers are available on the [VPR COVID-19 website](#).

#### ADDITIONAL DIRECTIVES FOR HOSPITAL-BASED and COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

1. Researchers engaged in patient-oriented / clinical research, community-based research and/or clinical trials should refer to [Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospital Research Ethics Board COVID-19 Update](#) and the [General Research Ethics Board COVID-19 Update](#) and queries should be directed to Jennifer Couture ([jennifer.couture@queensu.ca](mailto:jennifer.couture@queensu.ca)). For all central REB (CTO, OCREB) studies, please reach out to CTO/OCREB directly for any queries. Relevant example directives include:
  - Unless the research study is providing a potentially essential treatment option with limited enrollment, enrollment of new participants into research studies at the KHSC and PCC should be suspended;
  - Research participants required to enter the hospital for research follow-up visits should be contacted ahead of time to ensure they have not recently traveled internationally (within 14 days) and are not showing any clinical symptoms of COVID-19;
  - Consideration should be given to whether in-person interactions can be reduced in frequency or be replaced by virtual interactions while maintaining the scientific validity of the protocol. Revised participant consent or consent addendums may be required;
  - Community-based research studies should be delayed or postponed, where possible.
2. Access to KHSC (KGH and HDH sites) and PCC is restricted to essential visitors, which at present include active research participants who require entry for treatment or follow-up.
3. Researchers whose abilities to access critical relevant participant research data and/or files are severely impacted by COVID-19 (e.g., restricted site access, site closure) should contact Jennifer Couture ([jennifer.couture@queensu.ca](mailto:jennifer.couture@queensu.ca)) regarding HSREB policies and protocols.
4. Please use email as a first method of contact with KGHRI staff. Queries specifically related to KHSC-based research should be sent to Veronica Harris-McAllister ([Veronica.Harris-McAllister@kingstonhsc.ca](mailto:Veronica.Harris-McAllister@kingstonhsc.ca)), copying Steven Smith

([Steve.Smith@kingstonhsc.ca](mailto:Steve.Smith@kingstonhsc.ca)) while those related to research at Providence Care Centre should be directed to Alison Philpot ([philpota@providencecare.ca](mailto:philpota@providencecare.ca)), copying Claudio Soares ([Claudio.Soares@kingstonhsc.ca](mailto:Claudio.Soares@kingstonhsc.ca)).

5. Access to the W.J. Henderson Centre for Patient-Oriented Research on Connell 4 of the KGH site of KHSC will be restricted to ongoing research activities. Researchers and research staff must use their Hospital ID to access the Centre.

Finally, as stated by the Vice-Principal (Research), we need to keep in mind that this situation is very likely to last some time and may in fact change. Thus, we ask that each research group have contingency plans in place to wind down research operations to a minimum level should the need arise. At the same time, we should also be thinking about the longer-term progression and success of our research programs beyond the current ongoing public health risk, which will ensure the strength of our collective research mission.

Please feel free to reach out to me ([steven.smith@queensu.ca](mailto:steven.smith@queensu.ca) or [Steve.Smith@kingstonhsc.ca](mailto:Steve.Smith@kingstonhsc.ca)) at any time with questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steven Smith  
Vice-Dean, Research, Faculty Health Sciences, Queen's  
Vice-President, Health Sciences Research, KHSC  
President & CEO, KGHRI