



# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

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## MEMORANDUM FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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**To:** President's Executive Council  
**From:** Steve Sosland, Chief People Officer  
**Subject:** Operational Phases – Returning to Campuses during COVID-19 Pandemic  
**Date:** April 30, 2020

**Purpose:** In conjunction with President Trump's [Opening Up America Again](#) and Governor Abbott's [Report to Open Texas](#), Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) formed a task force<sup>1</sup> to develop a phased approach to safely return our operations back to campuses. The plan outlined in this document follows the original [four-phase operations plan](#) initiated by Chancellor Mitchell on March 16, 2020.

These phases will again serve as guidelines as we transition back to work on campuses, clinics, and managed care units, while continuing to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and potential rebound events.

Our priority is to protect TTUHSC team members (defined throughout this document as clinicians, faculty, staff, and students) by maintaining a safe working environment, allowing for the return to operations on our campuses, clinics, and managed care units.

TTUHSC operates in very diverse geographic areas across Texas. Local community leaders will establish guidelines and directives based on the conditions in those areas. Vice Presidents and Deans, in coordination with the Regional Deans, will determine the specific timing for reopening their respective campuses based on the COVID-19 situation at each campus, clinic, and managed care unit.

Our phased approach is tailored for our specific operations and goes above and beyond the minimum standards established in the president and governor's directives listed above.

We will measure the success of this plan by returning to work on campuses with no increase in COVID-19 cases on our team. This success depends on the self-discipline of each of our team members.

## **Emergency Remote Work Operational Phases**

### **Phase IV – Closed Campuses (Current Status)**

**Intent:** On-campus operations restricted to critical functions only and preparation for Phase III.

**Personnel Status:** During closed-campus operations, all team members are working remotely with an approved [Remote Work Agreement](#) with the exception of those positions designated as mission-critical<sup>2</sup>, who will continue to work fully or partially on campus, and those who have been approved for [Non-Work Pandemic Leave](#).

- *Vulnerable individuals*<sup>3</sup> may request accommodation from supervisors when their presence is required on campus, to ensure their safety at work.
- All team members must wear protective face coverings when on campus (refer to Appendix A) and adhere to strict protocols regarding [hand hygiene](#) when on campus. Exceptions include eating and drinking, which should be conducted individually and not in group settings.
- Every team member must report to one specific campus entry point for daily screening prior to entering any building. A TTUHSC staff member will scan each person's forehead before they enter, and anyone with a temperature higher than 100° F will be sent home.
- Campus Business Operations Officers will coordinate with relevant departments to identify and mark campus entry points and coordinate staffing, training and implementation.
- All team members accessing campus buildings must complete the [Employee Self-Attestation form](#) prior to arrival on campus.
- All individuals, when in public areas, should maximize physical distance from others.
- All team members should avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate social distancing (greater than 6 feet).

#### ***Nonclinical Operations:***

- Cancel all travel and events.
- Implement [mission-critical hiring process](#).
- Conduct all operations remotely, except for minimum workforce needed and approved by the President, including:
  - Critical clinics, as identified by respective Vice President and Deans.
  - Animal Resource Centers.
  - Buildings and equipment.
  - Police Department and Security Guards.

#### ***Clinical Operations:***

- Noncritical and routine clinical care can and will be conducted via telehealth visits when appropriate, as determined by the Department Chair and clinic supervisor.
- Only the patient will be allowed to attend in-person clinical appointments, unless the patient is a minor or an individual with assistance needs in which case they can be accompanied by one adult caregiver.
- Patients and accompanying guests will be screened upon entry to TTUHSC buildings. Appropriate screening methods will be determined by the President's Clinical Task Force.
- All patients and accompanying guests must wear protective face coverings when on campus.

**Managed Care Unit Operations:**

- Clinical care will be conducted via telehealth visits as appropriate, as determined by managed care leadership.
- Additional clinical operations at Managed Care units will follow TDCJ timeline for resuming offender movement/transports.

**Academic Operations:**

- All academic coursework will be offered online.
- Student participation in clinical rotations may continue as clinical sites allow if adequate PPE is available from clinical locations, unless otherwise directed by the respective Department Chair, Dean or Provost.

**Research Operations:**

- Research faculty, staff, and students will implement working remotely.
- On-campus research activity is restricted to critical functions only (i.e., ongoing animal experiments, experiments using time-sensitive materials and reagents, maintenance of clones of cells that cannot be frozen).
- No new animal experiments are permitted.
- Principal Investigators will determine critical functions for labs. Faculty, graduate students, and lab personnel required to be on campus should minimize time spent in the laboratory, utilize appropriate PPE (see Appendix A), and maintain social distancing guidelines.

**Phase III – Restricted Operations**

**Intent:** Continue operations remotely with limited on-campus presence and prepare for Phase II. We will move to Phase II based on specific conditions at each location and department.

**Personnel Status:** During restricted operations, team members identified in Phase IV as mission-critical are “on duty, working remotely” or “on-duty, working on campus.” Non-mission-critical individuals may be on campus if approved by their respective Dean, VP or Provost. All team members accessing campus buildings must complete the [Employee Self-Attestation form](#) prior to arrival on campus.

- *Vulnerable individuals*<sup>3</sup> may request accommodation from supervisors when their presence is required on campus, to ensure their safety at work.
- Access to TTUHSC facilities will be at approved entrance points only and all individuals must undergo screening procedures (i.e., temperature monitoring and symptom attestation survey).
- All team members must wear protective face coverings when on campus (refer to Appendix A). Exceptions include eating and drinking, which should be conducted individually and not in group settings.
- All individuals, when in public areas, should maximize physical distance from others.
- All team members should avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate social distancing (greater than 6 feet).
- Continue [Remote work agreements](#) and [Non-Work Pandemic Leave](#) procedures.
- Testing: As guidelines and availability increases, TTUHSC Clinical Task Force will give guidance on COVID-19 and antigen and antibodies testing.

**Nonclinical Operations:**

- Continue university mission-critical operations unless otherwise directed by the President, Vice President, Provost or Dean.
- Minimize nonessential travel and adhere to [CDC](#) and [Texas state guidelines](#) regarding isolation following travel.
- Continue employee recruitment for [mission-critical](#) positions only.
- University-sponsored conferences and events may resume with maximal attendance at 25% of room space capacity OR no more than 10 people, whichever is less.
- All attendees will wear appropriate facial covering (see Appendix A) and maintain social distancing of 6 feet or more.

***Clinical Operations:***

- Resume elective surgeries and procedures, as clinically appropriate, on an outpatient basis at facilities that adhere to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines.
- Clinical team members, and others with regular patient contact, will wear appropriate PPE, as designated by their supervisor. Dean or Department Chair may approve exceptions for certain specific specialties such as Speech Language Hearing Sciences.
- Continue utilizing telehealth for noncritical, routine office visits when possible, as determined by the Department Chair and clinical supervisor.
- Only the patient will be allowed to attend in-person clinical appointments, unless the patient is a minor or an individual with assistance needs in which case they can be accompanied by one adult caregiver.
- Patients and accompanying guests will be screened upon entry to TTUHSC buildings. Appropriate screening methods will be determined by the President's Clinical Task Force.
- All patients and accompanying guests must wear protective face coverings and adhere to strict protocols regarding [hand hygiene](#) when on campus.

***Managed Care Unit Operations:***

- Continue clinical care via telehealth visits as appropriate, as determined by managed care leadership.
- Additional clinical operations at Managed Care units will follow TDCJ timeline for resuming offender movement/transports.

***Academic Operations:***

- Continue to offer all academic coursework online, unless otherwise directed by the respective Dean or Provost.
- Student participation in clinical rotations may continue as clinical sites allow if adequate PPE is available, unless otherwise directed by the respective Department Chair, Dean or Provost.

***Research Operations:***

- New animal experiments considered essential can resume.
- Essential research personnel may return to their laboratory spaces in order to resume important experiments, defined by the Principal Investigator, and provided appropriate PPE is worn (see Appendix A) and social distancing of greater than 6 feet is followed.
- Principal Investigators will determine the number of lab personnel who can be present at the same time in the same space.

**Phase II - Limited Operations**

***Intent:*** Resume university campus-based operations with modifications and prepare for Phase I.

**Personnel Status:** Team members begin returning to their designated work locations. All faculty and staff are classified as “on duty.”

- Pandemic leave will be used for those team members required to quarantine.
- All team members who are sick from any cause will use normal sick leave procedures.
- Team members who cannot work from home will return to work from campus.
- [Emergency Remote Work Agreements](#) may be converted to telework agreements for selected individuals.
- All team members on campus must undergo daily screening (i.e., temperature monitoring and symptoms attestation survey), to be completed at the departmental level.
- At the supervisor’s discretion, begin returning team members back to campus work locations. Submit end dates for remote work agreements or convert to telework agreements.
- *Vulnerable individuals*<sup>3</sup> may request accommodation from supervisors when their presence is required on campus. This is the final group who will return to campuses to ensure their safety and that of others.
- Continue to encourage remote work locations whenever possible and feasible with unit operations.
- All team members must wear protective face coverings when on campus (refer to Appendix A). Exceptions include eating and drinking, which should be conducted individually and not in group settings.
- All individuals, when in public areas, should maximize physical distance from others.
- All team members should avoid gathering in groups of more than 50 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate social distancing (greater than 6 feet).

**Nonclinical Operations:**

- Return employee online training to in-person, where appropriate.
- University-sponsored conferences and events may resume with max attendance at 50% of room space capacity OR no more than 50 people, whichever is more conservative. All attendees will wear appropriate facial covering (see Appendix A) and maintain social distancing of 6 feet or more.
- Discourage the presence of visitors and nonessential volunteers on campus.
- Use discretion to minimize all nonessential in-person meetings.
- Use discretion to minimize the presence of third-party vendors to only those essential to ongoing university operations.
- Resume nonessential and international travel based on [CDC](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), and [Texas state guidelines](#).

**Clinical Operations:**

- Resume normal clinical operations and routine clinic visits for patients of all ages, unless otherwise directed by the Dean, Department Chair and clinic supervisor.
- Resume elective surgeries, as clinically appropriate, on both an outpatient and inpatient basis at facilities that adhere to CMS guidelines.
- All team members with patient contact, will wear appropriate PPE, as designated by their supervisor. Dean or Department Chair may approve exceptions for certain specific specialties such as Speech Language Hearing Sciences.
- Patients and any accompanying guests will be screened upon entry as directed by clinic supervisor.
- All patients and accompanying guests must wear protective face coverings and adhere to strict protocols regarding [hand hygiene](#) when on campus.
- Follow ambulatory clinic policies, direction from health authorities, and guidance from the CDC in addressing any rebound COVID-19 related cases.

***Managed Care Unit Operations:***

- Continue clinical care via telehealth visits as appropriate, as determined by managed care leadership.
- Additional clinical operations at Managed Care Units will follow TDCJ timeline for resuming offender movement/transports.

***Academic Operations:***

- Resume didactic and laboratory academic coursework on-campus, as appropriate, adhering to room capacity and social distancing guidelines outlined above.
- Schools/programs may opt to continue coursework online, at the Program Director or Dean's discretion.

***Research Operations:***

- Laboratory staff, graduate students, and other trainees return to normal full-time duties, provided appropriate PPE (see Appendix A) is worn and social distancing of greater than 6 feet is followed.
- In-person meetings are limited to less than 50% of room space capacity or no more than 50 people, whichever is less.

**Phase I - Normal Operations**

***Intent:*** Return to daily operations in all areas with no restrictions. Normal work location for some team members (i.e., on campus vs. remote working) may change following successes observed during Phase IV-Phase II operations. Vice Presidents and Deans are approving authority for determining new work locations.

***Personnel Status:***

- Vulnerable individuals<sup>3</sup> can resume public interactions but should continue practicing social distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.
- All team members should consider minimizing time spent in crowded environments.
- Face coverings are longer required.
- Continue to avoid physical contact including handshakes, hugs and typical greetings.

***Nonclinical Operations:***

- Large venues can operate without the need for social distancing.

***Clinical Operations:***

- Lift visitor restrictions in clinics.
- Team members who interact with patients must be diligent regarding [hand hygiene](#).

***Managed Care Unit Operations:***

- On-site clinic visits, procedures, therapies, and group activities resume without the need for social distancing.
- Team members who interact with patients must be diligent regarding [hand hygiene](#).

***Academic Operations:***

- Resume academic coursework on-campus without the need for social distancing.

***Research Operations:***

- Resume laboratory processes without the need for social distancing.

## Appendix A: On-Campus Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidelines

### Obtaining PPE:

- All clinical team members will be provided with appropriate face coverings by their clinical supervisor or director, based on the level of interaction with patients and visitors.
- Nonclinical team members are responsible for obtaining personal face coverings prior to arrival on campus or at other university facilities.
- Students are responsible for obtaining personal face coverings prior to arriving on campus or at other university facilities for didactic studies. PPE for students on clinical rotations will be provided by the clinical site based on the level of interaction with patients and visitors.

### Recommendations for cleaning and replacing PPE:

- All team members are responsible for regular laundering of cloth face coverings.
  - Guidance on do-it-yourself cloth face coverings can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> and <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-and-surgical-masks-face-masks>
- Surgical masks may be worn continually without need of daily replacement; proper fitting and face coverage should be of top priority at all times.
- For information on decontamination of N-95 masks, please contact [Justin White](#) (President's Office).

### PPE Enforcement:

- Department supervisors will be responsible for enforcing the PPE requirements listed above. Noncompliance with PPE requirements will be reported to the respective Dean, Vice-President or Provost.

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#### <sup>1</sup> Return to Work Operations Planning Task Force members:

Carrie Culpepper, FNP-C, MBA, Director of Nursing, Montford Unit, Managed Care Division  
Stephanie Moses, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, School of Medicine  
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Kathryn Panasci, PT, DPT, Assistant Professor, Doctor of Physical Therapy, School of Health Professions  
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<sup>2</sup> Mission-critical core functions, President's Executive Council, Security, Managing Director of Employee Assistance Program, direct patient care providers, clinical department chairs, facilities, operations, budget accounting (emergency purchasing and processing authority), Human Resources (selected staff)

<sup>3</sup> Current federal guidelines define **vulnerable individuals** (previously termed at-risk by the CDC) as those over 65 years of age and those with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity (body mass index >40), asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.