

Weekly Webinar 4/1/20 - Highlights with Dean Hilary Godwin

- **General update:** This week we are closing in on nearly a million total confirmed cases globally and total deaths have more than doubled since last week to more than 45,000. Sadly, Dr. Gita Ramjee, a prominent South African researcher on HIV, who held an honorary title of clinical professor of global health at the UW, passed away. Our hearts go out to those who knew her and all of her friends, family and colleagues.
- **Modeling of COVID-19 in King and Snohomish Counties:** Presented by Kathryn Peebles, a recent graduate of our epidemiology PhD program, where her research focused on HIV prevention and women's sexual and reproductive health. She is currently a Research Scientist at the International Clinical Research Center. [See her slides](#). Kathryn's key points:
 - Community-wide social distancing through April 8 will have a positive impact, but likely needs to be extended
 - High compliance to social distancing measures is critical to achieve intended impact
 - Future mitigation strategies must limit transmission from asymptomatic individuals
- **COVID-19 PEP study:** Presented by Ruanne Barnabas, an associate professor in global health and medicine. She works on clinical trials for HIV, HPV vaccines and mathematical modeling. She is leading a randomized clinical trial to assess whether hydroxychloroquine, a common anti-malarial and autoimmune drug, can prevent coronavirus infection.
 - "We think hydroxychloroquine will help disrupt community transmission of the virus. This will give us critical data on the efficacy of hydroxychloroquine for prevention."
 - The study will enroll 2,000 participants in Seattle and New York, and several other sites across the United States. Researchers are looking for people who have recently been exposed to COVID-19 in the last three days. (Ideally household contacts.)
 - The study started April 1 at the UW Virology Research Clinic.
- **Travel:** We have decided to extend the [current travel restrictions](#) for SPH employees until May 1. Exceptions to this policy will be rare and must be supported and proposed by your Department Chair for approval by our Vice Dean, Jared Baeten.
 - Additionally, Provost Mark Richards has decided that official UW student travel will not be allowed until further notice. This decision includes study abroad for summer quarter.
 - These restrictions do not apply to personal travel. However, we strongly encourage you to avoid any travel.
- **UW Commencement and SPH Graduate Celebration:** We are going to figure out a way to celebrate our graduates, even if it does not happen in the way we had originally planned. More details to come.

- **“Zoombombing:”** A number of instructors at the UW have reported incidents of ‘Zoombombing’ (where uninvited guests enter meetings and can disrupt learning). Learn how to prevent this scenario from happening with [these tips from the UW Information School](#).
- **Online bullying or discrimination:** If you see or hear any bullying online, particularly in your Zoom meetings and webinars, be sure to get a screenshot, if possible, and email Stephanie Farquhar about these incidents. Victoria Gardner is also available to follow up on issues related to racism, xenophobia and any sort of discrimination.
- **Student symposiums:** Both the MPH Practicum Symposium and the SPH Undergraduate Symposium will be held online via Zoom this year.
- **Impact of COVID-19 on operating budget:** We are cognizant that COVID-19 is impacting our most vulnerable communities from both an economic and a health perspective. Long term, our plan is to try and prevent layoffs by redirecting employment and accommodating people internally. In the short term, we’re asking people *not to* lay off any individuals.
- **Impacts on hiring:** There is a soft hiring freeze. We should not be hiring new staff (other than those hires that are already in progress), unless they are doing work on COVID-19 or are essential to our ability to manage operations during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Coronavirus webpage:** Please see our new and expanded SPH Coronavirus Website (<http://sph.washington.edu/coronavirus>) for updates, new research and stories. There are opportunities for folks to support our SEAL Team, the MetaCenter for Pandemic Disease Preparedness and the SPH Excellence Fund, which supports students in need.
- **Research update from Lisa Manhart:**
 - Some in-person activities are still permitted, but only ‘critical’ laboratory personnel should be coming into campus facilities.
 - All other research personnel should be working from home. Literature reviews, organization of study procedures, documentation, data analysis, and manuscript preparation are all things everyone can do.
 - The UW continues to work out how to manage charges to grants during this time of reduced productivity. We expect to have more guidance soon.
 - The NIH published a variety of funding notices and RFAs for COVID-19 specific research schedule, and the Population Health Initiative will be releasing a COVID-19 rapid response funding call on Monday for awards of up to \$20K and project periods of three months.
- **SPH volunteer update:** Janet Baseman and her team have completed analysis of the volunteer survey sent last month. Stay tuned for more information. A student member of the SEAL Team is currently working with the UW’s Environmental Health and Safety team to create an epidemiological curve of campus cases.
- **COVID-19 status in Washington state:** The Washington State Department of Health has released new data visualizations that illustrate the current status of COVID-19 in our state, as well as the progression of the COVID-19 outbreak in cases and deaths over time (also known as the epidemiologic curve). [Check them out.](#)