

The DOM Insider

Special COVID-19 Edition



Washington University physicians (from left) Han Li, MD, Cristina Vazquez Guillamet, MD, and Gerome Escota, MD, are part of a team of dedicated doctors, nurses and other medical professionals on the front lines of the battle against COVID-19. *Photographer - Matt Miller*

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Letter from the Chair



Dear colleagues and friends,

I hope this message finds you and your families well during this difficult and uncertain time. My thoughts are with you all as we face the challenges of our new daily lives amid the COVID-19 outbreak. This is also a moment in time when the work that we do within the Department of Medicine is its most critical.

In just a matter of just weeks, life has changed dramatically for our department. We have pivoted from providing the best in education, research and patient care to continuing our mission under the daunting conditions of a global pandemic. Our Department team has risen to this challenge with exceptional resilience, determination and professionalism.

Included within this special edition of our Department newsletter are just some of the accounts and messages of care, teamwork and perseverance from the past few weeks. The enclosed stories prove that these difficult times are bringing out our best. The courage and kindness displayed by Department of Medicine faculty, staff, fellows, and residents is truly inspiring; I have never been more proud to be part of this organization than I am now.

I wish you all renewed strength and positive thoughts as we continue in this battle. Collectively, we will be able to weather what lies ahead if we continue to collaborate, learn, and support one another. Please remain in touch and reach out to share stories, seek community and suggest needed resources. As a Department of Medicine community, we are truly all in this together.

Best Regards,
Victoria J. Fraser, MD
 Adolphus Busch Professor of Medicine
 Chair, Department of Medicine

Resources for Information

For university-wide guidance regarding COVID-19, visit coronavirus.wustl.edu
Department of Medicine communications can be found on the Department's [COVID-19 page](#)

Stories of Care, Resilience and Hope from Across the Department of Medicine

- **Published in the April 30th issue of The Record, “On the Front Lines in Fight Against COVID-19” features the stories of several Department of Medicine faculty including:**

- [Gerome Escota, MD](#)
- [Cristina Vazquez Guillamet, MD](#)
- [Han Li, MD](#)
- [Patrick Lyons, MD](#)
- [Colleen McEvoy, MD](#)
- [William Powderly, MD](#)

Read the full article [here](#).

- **Medical Student Secures Mask Donation**

In March, third year medical student Mary Zhu told her mother in China about the shortage of PPE in hospitals across the country. Her mother responded by sending approximately 400 masks (including N95 and surgical isolation masks) to donate to BJH. Elizabeth Perelstein, MD, helped Mary coordinate the delivery of the masks to the Emergency Department and to Incident Command. Perelstein also helped coordinate thank you gifts for Mary and her mother.



Elizabeth Perelstein, MD coordinated personal thank you gifts for Mary (an assortment of baked goods) and her mother (a cross-stitched dove with an olive branch).

- **Ford Motor Co. Donates Face Shields to Department of Medicine**

When Ford started making shields for health-care workers, WashU third-year medical student Rebecca Chen reached out to her parents, both Ford employees, to see if they could put in a request for Washington University. Chen’s mother, Ling Shi, helped to secure a donation for WashU and thousands of masks arrived in late April.



Resident Brendan Caprio, MD, displays a face shield donated by Ford Motor Co.



WUSM student Rebecca Chen models face shield.

Stories of Care, Resilience and Hope cont.

• Department of Medicine Husband and Wife Team Join Forces to Provide Face Masks to WUSM Patients and Staff

When the COVID-19 situation developed in early March, Glenda Bullock, director of research and business administration within the Department of Medicine, found herself working from home and wanting to do something to help her colleagues. So she tapped her sewing skills and started making face masks in the evenings. "I wanted to do something to help the cause," commented Bullock. "I'm not a clinician but I knew there had to be a way I could help, even if it was in a very small way."

Glenda, a quilter in her spare time, already had yards of cotton fabric in her craft room. She found a pattern on Pinterest and soon was producing masks in bulk. Bullock reasoned, "I thought why not use my talents and the fabric to make masks. I knew they wouldn't be appropriate for our caregivers, but patients and the general public could use them."



Glenda Bullock sewing face masks.

Bullock's husband, Dennis Bullock, also a Department of Medicine staffer in the division of Gastroenterology, works on campus delivering mail and packages and serves as her distribution channel for the face masks. He delivered over 240 of Glenda's masks directly to the Department of Medicine to be shared with staffers and their families. "Staffers ask Dennis where he got his mask while he is making his rounds delivering packages," commented Bullock. "So, from these inquiries, I've made 60 more masks that Dennis has delivered." She plans to continue making as many masks as possible until there is no longer a need.

• Pulmonology Staffer Coordinates Wellness Baskets for Front-Line Providers

Becky Light, administrative coordinator in pulmonary and critical care medicine, in an effort to do something positive for campus medical providers working on the frontlines of COVID-19, created an Amazon wish list and shared it with family and friends via Facebook. Donations were delivered to her office, where she assembled wellness baskets. The baskets included Chapstick, lotion, a drink, pens, novelty Post-its and snacks. She and colleagues delivered 40 wellness packs to the COVID floors at the beginning of April. As donations continued to arrive, she was able to deliver 39 more baskets to respiratory therapists/Respiratory Care Services, who split the items with Physical Therapy.



Basket recipients included pulmonary and critical care physicians (from left to right) Walter Schiffer, Adam Anderson and Vlad Despotovic.

• Medical clinic shifts approach to patient care to defend against COVID-19

Across the globe, health-care clinics have had to abruptly and radically adjust operations to cope with the demands of COVID-19. "Physicians are making choices that haven't been faced in our lifetimes," writes Jennifer Schmidt, an assistant professor of medicine. "For a group of very evidence-driven people, this isn't just uncomfortable, it's scary." Schmidt converted her adult primary care clinic to telemedicine using guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. She details the clinic's coronavirus response strategy in [NEJM Catalyst](#). In her paper, Schmidt writes about the extraordinary circumstances and summarizes examples of telephone scripts and decision trees.

Stories of Care, Resilience and Hope cont.

• Resident Group Buddy Support System in Internal Medicine

During these challenging times, residents are in a unique situation of being in a training program. While trying to balance their clinical responsibilities in the hospital and maintaining a rich educational environment, they now have the added stress of dealing with a pandemic and all of the uncertainty that comes with it. As they practice social/physical distancing, we need to ensure that they are finding ways to remain connected and supported. The Internal Medicine residency GME Wellness champions, Beth Terry, MD, Doug Hall, MD and Doug Kyrouac, MD and GME Wellness faculty advisors, Rakhee Bhayani, MD and Carol Faulk, MD came together to discuss ways to provide this support to the residents through these difficult times and decided on a creative model of smaller buddy groups of 3-4 residents within our larger residency program. The residents are assigned groups based on their rotations to ensure at least one resident is on an outpatient rotation at any given time. The hope is that the resident can help support their colleagues that are on more time intensive rotations by helping with clinic tasks, create virtual meet-ups and weekly check-ins as a group. This proactive step was implemented very quickly as a strategy to provide peer support. Contact [Rakhee Bhayani, MD](#) for more details about how to use this model for other residency programs.



Resident General Medical Education Wellness Champions supporting each other via a Zoom call. (clockwise, Beth Terry, Doug Kyrouac and Doug Hall)

• Primary Care Medicine Clinic Adapts During Covid-19

The faculty, residents and support staff in the Primary Care Medicine Clinic in the Center for Outpatient Health have been working tirelessly and selflessly to care for our most vulnerable patient population. Since the beginning of the pandemic, healthcare providers in the PCMC have continued to see patients, including patients suspected of being Covid-19 positive who needed outpatient care they could not obtain elsewhere. In the last two weeks alone, the clinic has cared for over 500 patients either via telemedicine or in-person.



Peter McDonnell, MD, orienting residents to the video visit platform in the Center for Outpatient Health.

In addition, a safety net program has been created with the assistance of Wash U medical students for all PCMC patients diagnosed with Covid-19 and the clinic continues to leverage technology, including incorporating video visits, to better serve our patients' needs.

The willingness of our healthcare providers to adapt to rapid change while providing excellent care has been nothing short of inspiring!

• Nephrology Dialysis Centers Receive Donations from Local Business Owner

Nephrology has instituted a "Zap 'N Go" N95 sterilation station, in collaboration with Div. of ID and others in WU, to re-use PPE in dialysis units. Nephrologist [George Jarad, MD](#) was instrumental in getting the protocol up and running. See story [here](#).

Stories of Care, Resilience and Hope cont.

• Nephrology Dialysis Centers Receive Donations from Local Business Owner

Local business owner [Paul Hamilton](#) generously donated supplies of nitrile gloves and bottles of hydrogen peroxide and alcohol to WashU Nephrology dialysis centers. The hydrogen peroxide and alcohol are being used to make hand sanitizer. Hamilton is the owner and operator of [Hamilton Hospitality](#), a multi-concept restaurant group. According to Hamilton, "You guys need it more than we do!" Hamilton also gave away free hand sanitizer to the public while supplies lasted. See story [here](#).

• WASH YOU!

WashU Nephrology is making their own hand sanitizer to supplement existing supplies. The sanitizer is being used in dialysis centers, as well as being distributed across the School of Medicine to those who need it. The hand sanitizer is registered with the FDA and is called Wash YOU. [Sanjay Jain, PhD](#), says special thanks go to [Meei-Hua Lin, PhD](#), and [Jennifer Richardson](#) from the [Jeff Miner Lab](#), and [Amanda Knoten](#) from the [Jain Lab](#), who are actually making the preparation. See story [here](#).



(From left) Amanda Knoten, Dr. Sanjay Jain, Jennifer Richardson and Dr. Meei-Hua Lin making hand sanitizer from donated ingredients.

• DIY Cloth Masks

Laura Kipper, a WashU transplant administrative coordinator, and Karen Kirk a nurse at Forest Park Dialysis Center, have been making cloth face masks for WashU Nephrology's healthcare workers in the dialysis centers. The cloth masks are usually worn over N95 and surgical masks. They are washable, re-useable, and can help extend the life of the medical masks. "I just want to do what I can to help prevent and/or slow the spread of this virus," says Kipper. See story [here](#).



One of Karen Kirk's DIY "camo" masks being worn at Forest Park Dialysis Center.

Stories of Care, Resilience and Hope cont.

• Generosity is Contagious – and Global!

[Jason Mills, MD, PhD](#), WashU Division of Gastroenterology, generously donated 600 high-quality masks to his friend [Sanjay Jain, MD, PhD](#), in WashU Nephrology. Mills was passing on the gift he had received from a colleague overseas who had been on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19. In addition, [Zhao Sun, PhD](#), a postdoctoral research associate in WashU Department of Developmental Biology, received KN95 masks from his parents in China and automatically donated the masks to WashU Nephrology. Sun had previously worked in the [lab](#) of division chief, [Benjamin Humphreys, MD, PhD](#). "I was part of the Chromalloy family." See story [here](#).



Jason Mills, MD, PhD, (left) and Zhao Sun, PhD (right)



Small acts of kindness for essential workers. Frontline staff show appreciation for Raad Al Mosawi, housekeeper on the 7th floor at the Center for Advanced Medicine. Pictured here on the left is Blair Perez, PSR III. She helped organize this recognition for Raad and presented a gift basket to him.

Nephrology Prepares for COVID-19

• “Cheat Sheet” and Attending-only Service

WashU nephrologist [Anitha Vijayan, MD](#), medical director for Acute Dialysis Services at BJH, helped develop guidelines for the management of COVID-19 patients with acute kidney injury. Vijayan created a “cheat sheet” to help the attending nephrologists manage dialysis treatments and conserve resources. The cheat sheet highlights protocols for renal consults, COVID ICU rounds, acute kidney injury management, renal replacement therapy, daily rounds, management of end stage renal disease patients, and other considerations when taking care of COVID-19 patients. The division also instituted a voluntary, attending-only COVID service, to protect our nephrology trainees.

• Problem Solving

Early on, WashU Nephrology had a challenge as to how to identify their outpatient dialysis patients’ COVID-19 testing and results. To ensure the patients were properly placed in the dialysis centers, it was imperative to know their status. Jodean Baldauf, nephrology’s senior director of business operations & business development, was instrumental in setting up the means to monitor the COVID-19 testing status of patients in EPIC. “We are fortunate to have many individuals at the university who are great at problem solving,” says Baldauf, who worked with the EPIC team to get the system set up.

• Communication

A weekly COVID-19 ZOOM conference call allows WashU nephrology healthcare workers to discuss topics and share information concerning both in-patient and out-patient dialysis patients. Read full story [here](#).



Thanks to National Beverage Corporation for the donation of LaCroix water to keep our health care heroes hydrated!

Stories of Care, Resilience and Hope cont.

• #nephSTRONG

As a gesture of appreciation for how everyone has pulled together during the COVID-19 pandemic, WashU Nephrology distributed t-shirts to its 180 faculty, staff and trainees. The t-shirts are compliments of an anonymous donor and were designed by children of two WashU Nephrology faculty members. Dr. [Anitha Vijayan's](#) daughter, Maya Menon, and Dr. [Tingting Li's](#) son, Nate, came up with the logo of two kidneys nestled into the shape of a heart. The slogan reads: #nephSTRONG – WashU Division of Nephrology – better together. See story [here](#).



Drs. Anitha Vijayan (Left) and Tingting Li hold up #nephSTRONG t-shirts. Anitha's daughter, Maya Menon, and Tingting's son, Nate, designed the logo.



Banners donated to Nephrology for Use in Dialysis Units and Office Space.

• COVID-19 Survivors Needed to Donate Blood Plasma

Infectious diseases physicians have developed an expanded access program to give blood plasma from COVID-19 survivors to critically ill patients at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. [Read more.](#)

• Infectious Diseases Faculty and Fellows Disseminate COVID Information to Spanish-Speaking Community.

Read full story [here](#).

• Infectious Diseases Faculty Featured on New WashU Podcast, "Show Me the Science"

- [Jeffrey P. Henderson, MD, PhD, an associate professor of medicine and of molecular microbiology](#)
- [Steven J. Lawrence, MD, an associate professor of medicine March 26, 2020](#)

• Caline Matter, MD, co-investigator of study to evaluate antidepressant as potential COVID-19 treatment.

[Read more.](#)

• Clinical trial launches to evaluate antimalarial drugs for COVID-19 treatment.

[Read more.](#)

• Infectious Disease faculty member, Steve Lawrence, MD, warns St. Louis has a brief window of opportunity to slow the coronavirus.

[Read more.](#)

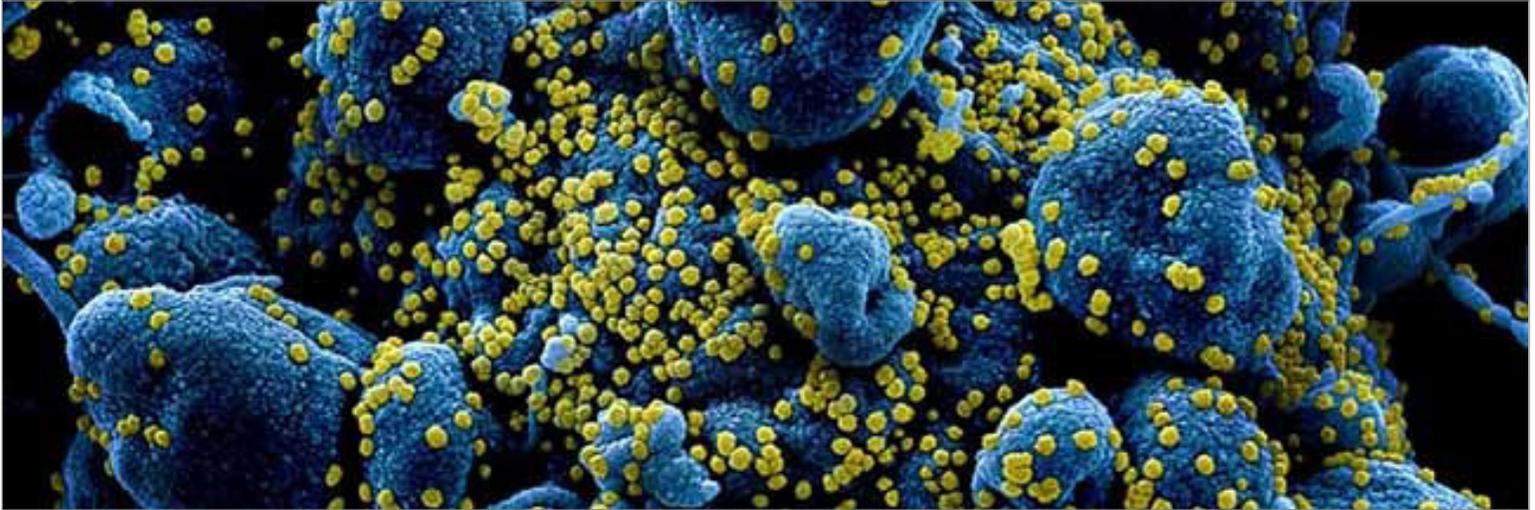


Steven J. Lawrence, MD

Stories of Care, Resilience and Hope cont.

- **Bill Powderly MD, Jeff Milbrandt, MD, PhD, and Sean Whelan, PhD, lead COVID-19 research governance structure at Washington University.**

[Read more.](#)



A 3D rendering of COVID-19 molecules.

- **WashU Expert: The architecture of virus transmission.**

Researchers propose new method for treating airborne pathogens. [Read more.](#)

- **Washington University medical students design reusable face shields.**

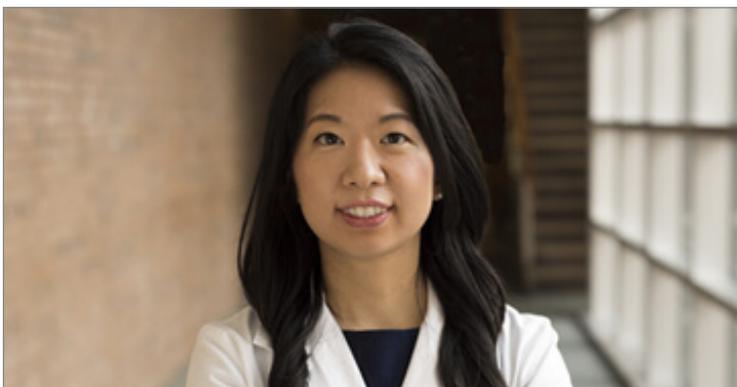
[Read more.](#)

- **Possible COVID-19 treatment: transfusion of antibodies from recovered patients' blood.**

[Read more.](#)

- **Jennie Kwon, DO, MSCI will lead all COVID-19 related issues for WUSM Student and Occupational Health.**

[Read more.](#)



*Jennie H. Kwon, DO, MSCI
Photographer - Robert J. Boston*

- [Colleen McEvoy, MD](#), Assistant Professor of Medicine in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, has provided extraordinary service to critically ill patients. As co-leader of the COVID Critical Care task force, Dr. McEvoy and her staff collaborated with numerous specialties to develop COVID management guidelines based on the experience with other diseases, supplemented with clinical experience of COVID-19 at BJH and from colleagues around the country and globe, and incorporated the rapidly growing published scientific literature on COVID-19. [Read more.](#)

- [Patrick Lyons, MD](#), Instructor of Medicine in The Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine has been attending in the COVID ICUs and leading the clinical operations on the ground in these units since March 16.

The clinical work has involved admitting critically ill patients with diagnosed or suspected COVID-19, performing urgent critical care procedures like intubations, central lines, and chest tubes, rounding on these patients with the team of fellows and APPs, and staying in contact with patients' families via telephone.

[Read more.](#)

Voices from Across the Department of Medicine

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“Since the beginning of the pandemic, members of every division in the Department of Medicine have demonstrated incredible flexibility and willingness to adapt practices in the face of constant change. In normal times, processes are carefully developed and refined over time. These days, workflows and practices often change multiple times in one day. Our faculty have been consistently willing to make the changes necessary to handle the rapidly evolving situation. Hospitalists and intensivists rapidly shifted schedules to align patients with appropriate providers, cardiologists developed new ways to obtain and record echocardiograms, and oncologists have worked together to develop processes to help patients with cancer continue receiving time sensitive care. Academic medicine is not known for tolerating rapid changes but across the Department, our teams have demonstrated incredible capacity to handle everything that has been asked of them. This adaptability hasn't been easy but it is has enabled our patients to receive the exact care they need, right when they need it.”

– Patrick Aguilar, MD,
Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

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“When changes started happening Mike Lin took the lead and prepared the Division of Hospital Medicine. He worked though his vacation, weekends, and personal time. Mike addressed specific needs and concerns with each and every of the many doctors in his division. He hand delivered PPE; including a pair of goggles for each provider. He's hand delivered meals to his front line workers. He's overseen the staff who have been writing covid management manuals, the watch dog for process efficiency, and the eyes and ears of our response. He's made the division available for critical steps in the hospital's response while still being a personal and loyal leader.”

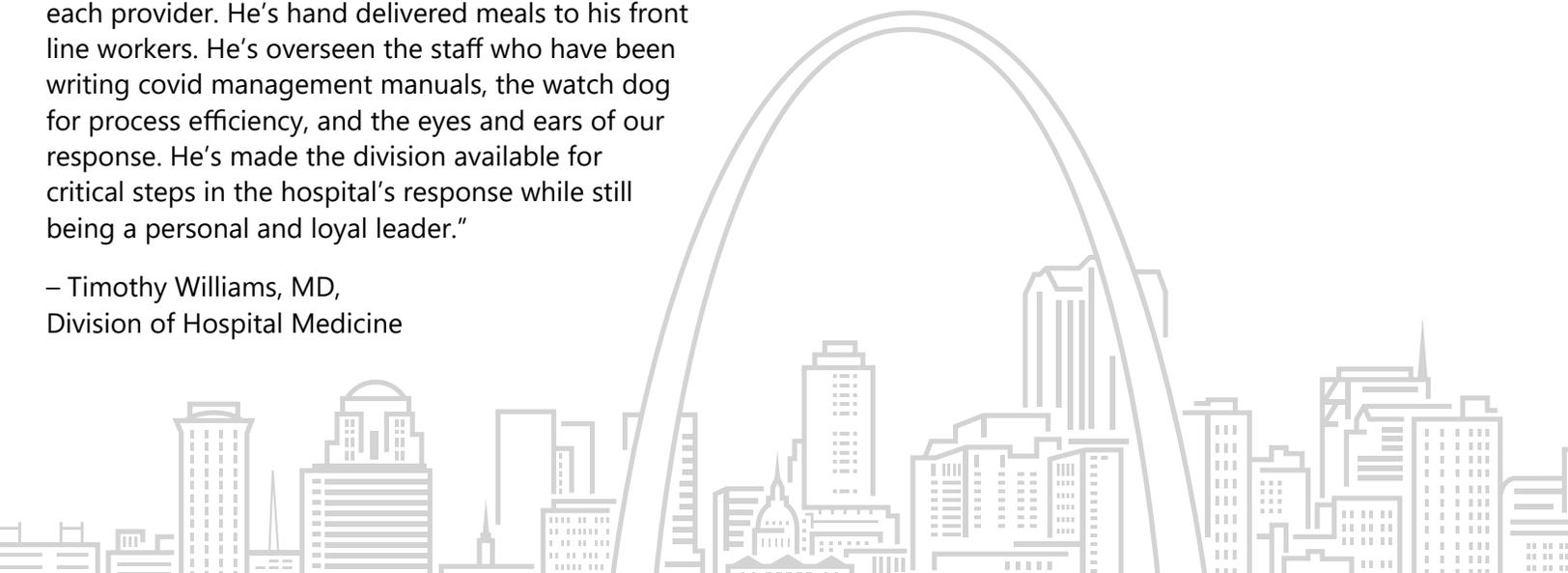
– Timothy Williams, MD,
Division of Hospital Medicine

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“The faculty and staff at the Infectious Disease Clinical Research Unit (ID-CRU) have a rich tradition of rising to the occasion when a healthcare crisis occurs. For many years they worked tirelessly to make an impact in the areas of HIV, hepatitis, fungal and other infectious diseases. They have once again risen to the occasion as our world faces a COVID-19 pandemic. Along with other researchers within WashU and around the country, they are combatting this virus. COVID-19 studies were conceived, written, approved and implemented in record time. Several staff persons remain on the front lines, to ensure implementation of these new studies. Each have once again shown resilience, bravery and adaptability. The members of ID-CRU, all with a passion for the work they do, give their all to help our community and our world; asking for nothing more than healthy outcomes for our participants and families impacted by this novel enemy. Dr. Rachel Presti, Dr. Jane O'Halloran, and the CRU staff have done amazing work placing some ongoing studies on hold while opening at least 6 COVID studies at the same time! It is a remarkable achievement.”



Department of Medicine
Health Care Heroes



COVID-19 Epic Update

Please reference the most recent EPIC Action Report found [here](#). This report provides valuable COVID-related updates on EPIC.



Share Hero Stories

Got a great story about health-care workers or other colleagues who are providing essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic? From front-line emergency clinicians to maintenance and food workers, many are daily risking their own lives to take care of our community. We want to share these inspirational stories with the broader community. Tweet your story to #WashUtogether or email heroes@wustl.edu for possible inclusion in the COVID-19 Update newsletter or on School of Medicine social media feeds.

Department of Medicine Health Care Heroes

The Department of Medicine is looking to share stories of our health care heroes in action. Please send your stories and updates to DOM.media@wustl.edu for possible inclusion on the DOM Twitter feed.