



Dear Colleagues,

Fifteen months ago, as the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly spread throughout our region, nation, and world, we restricted research at Rutgers University to programs deemed “critical.” The ramp-down of research was necessarily rapid and highly disruptive, but with research at the core of the university’s mission, culture, and future, we outlined a path forward and have since successfully and safely restored and repopulated a vast majority of our research at Rutgers using a phased, sustainable, and adaptable process.

As the rest of the university begins its return to campus this summer, we pause to acknowledge you – our researchers – who have paved the way for the safe repopulation of our campus. As the first to return to campus nearly a year ago (though some of you never really left), you have demonstrated enduring perseverance and leadership throughout the Return to Research process. That we have had no transmissions of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in our labs and research facilities is a testament to your commitment to safety and our beloved community, and for this **we congratulate and thank you.**

Now, it is time to advance together towards our “new normal” at Rutgers and prepare to transition to the final phase when all research may recommence with few restrictions under the framework detailed in President Holloway’s [message](#) and the updated [Guide to Returning to Rutgers](#).

Recognizing that vaccination will be paramount in the safe repopulation of Rutgers, we urge all members of the research community to [get vaccinated](#) and upload their vaccine cards to the [Vaccine Portal](#). Researchers who are fully vaccinated and have uploaded their vaccine cards are no longer required or eligible to undergo [weekly COVID-19 testing](#), effective immediately.

Advancing towards our “new normal” also includes the continued need for:

- safe **social distancing** of at least six feet;
- **face coverings** indoors in common/shared spaces & when six-foot separation is not possible;
- maintaining good **hygiene** and sanitation (i.e. washing hands often; cleaning shared research equipment before and after each use, etc.);
- complying with [daily symptom check](#) protocols; and
- complying with the university’s policy and applicable laws on testing, tracing, and quarantining.

As the situation evolves, we will continue to evaluate any new developments and take necessary steps to respond to changing conditions and new information. In the meantime, we urge you to regularly visit research.rutgers.edu/coronavirus for research-specific updates and coronavirus.rutgers.edu for the most current universitywide COVID-19 information and *Returning to Rutgers* guidance.

Additional Links to Key Resources:

- [Domestic and International Travel Guidance](#)
- [Event and Activity Certification System](#) – Submit requests for hosting on-campus events, research symposia, conferences, etc.

We are immensely grateful for your continued effort and support as we strive to preserve a safe and productive research environment at Rutgers.

Sincerely,

Kathleen W. Scotto, PhD, Interim Senior Vice President for Research

Emergency Operations Committee – Research Team

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