

Office of the President

1975 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite C1747  
San Francisco, CA 94158

747 52<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Oakland, CA 94609

tel: (415) 476-6744  
fax: (510) 654-8474  
Michael.Anderson@ucsf.edu

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Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland d/b/a UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital  
Oakland

Open Letter to Research Sponsors and Collaborating Institutions

RE: Interim Research Policies due to COVID-19

Dear Sponsors and Collaborators:

The University of California San Francisco Office of Research has issued important notices in response to the current and developing impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on its research, and medical and student communities. These notices include a policy on human subjects-related research visits to UCSF campuses and affiliated hospitals posted on the official UCSF coronavirus website. With the ongoing impact of COVID-19 related activities, faculty and managers of all laboratories and research facilities across UCSF and its affiliated hospitals are actively addressing any significant disruption to operations.

The institutional review board for Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland d/b/a UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland (CHRCO) is governed by these policies. The Interim UCSF Policy on Human Subjects-Related Research Visits, which applies to CHRCO during the COVID-19 outbreak, was posted on March 11th, 2020. That policy includes measures that provide COVID-19 mitigation guidance and recommends conducting research visits remotely, whenever feasible. In-person research visits are only permitted if deemed to be essential to the health/well-being of the study participant.

Changes made to research in response to a public health threat can be made without first obtaining IRB review and approval, provided that the change in the research was made to mitigate apparent immediate hazards to the subject. It is noted, however, that this approach is limited to the activities identified in the Interim Policy and applies to CHRCO IRB-reviewed studies affected by the UCSF Public Health Mandate.

In response to the call to "flatten the curve" in the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak, all principal investigators were ordered to shut down all noncritical research activities. We understand that the long-term viability of many research programs during this period will require management of essential animal lines, equipment, liquid nitrogen stocks, and certain long-term experiments. We are working to ensure the long-term viability of our research program in spite of this unprecedented situation. Researchers have been encouraged to continue their research at home to the extent possible, e.g., data analysis, writing, etc.

We ask for your understanding as we navigate the COVID-19 outbreak, and are grateful for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,



Michael Anderson, MD, MBA, FAAP, FCCM  
President, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals