

Fred Hutch and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance share guidance with employees who are protesting during the Seattle COVID-19 Pandemic

SEATTLE — June 5, 2020 — The murder of Mr. George Floyd has once again brought the issue of racial injustice to the forefront of our nation, our state and our city. There have been calls from our community for systemic change, and many have taken to the streets in protest. Such protests are not only part of our First Amendment rights, they are also an opportunity to speak in solidarity with communities of color, the Black Lives Matter movement and those in our own workplaces who have been directly affected by racism.

We are also in the midst of a viral pandemic that is driven by social gatherings, transmitted through close contact, and associated with significant morbidity and mortality among those affected by the disease. Many of the policies developed for our center, our partner institutions and in Washington state have focused on avoiding large group activities and unnecessary community exposures, and on using physical distancing as a way to prevent infections.

We have made tremendous progress in limiting the spread of COVID-19, and with support of public health experts we have started to see portions of our local community begin to re-open. However, most people remain at risk for infection, and there are concerns about increases in transmission as policies related to physical distancing change.

We want everyone who participates in the protests to recognize that by coming together, there is a potential risk of acquiring COVID-19. Individuals must make the personal decision to participate in such activities taking into account risks to themselves and their close contacts if they were to develop COVID-19. We recognize and understand, however, that an individual's desire to pursue social change, equal justice and racial equality may outweigh their concerns about COVID-19. We support our employees who choose to protest while making the effort to keep our communities protected from COVID-19.

In order to protect our employees, we have developed the following guidelines modeled on those created by [Public Health — Seattle & King County](#). These guidelines provide steps employees can take to help limit exposures, protect themselves and protect our community from COVID-19 while taking part in local protests. These guidelines are not intended to discourage anyone from participating in the protests but are instead provided to guide participation in a safe manner to the extent possible.

Recommendations

1. If you are symptomatic or have recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19:

Do not participate in community protests if you feel ill, have active respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, fever (or [other symptoms of COVID-19](#)), or have recently been exposed to a close contact with documented COVID-19.

2. If you are asymptomatic and plan on joining a protest:

- Wear a mask or face covering that fully covers your nose and mouth.
- Strongly consider wearing or having ready access to goggles or eye protection for added protection (avoid wearing contacts).
- Bring hand sanitizer and use it frequently.
- Avoid sharing drinks, carrying other's signs or touching objects that others have touched.
- Attempt to limit your group size and maintain six feet of physical distance whenever possible during the activity.
- Try to avoid crowded activities that involve shouting or singing in close proximity to others, and avoid those who are not wearing masks or face coverings if possible.
- Bring your own water, food or other personal items.

3. After participating in local protests:

Self-monitor for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) for 14 days after the activity. If you develop even mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19, stay home, self-isolate and contact Environmental Health & Safety to get tested for COVID-19.

If others who participated in the protests, such as household members, close contacts or those whom you had close contact with for more than 15 minutes in an enclosed space (e.g., a car) are diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you receive a call from Public Health about a possible exposure, follow the recommendations for self-isolation, and contact Environmental Health & Safety to get tested for COVID-19.

Additional questions/more information

For answers to additional questions and more information, see Public Health — Seattle & King County's [Answering questions about protests and COVID-19](#) page.

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At [Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center](#), home to three Nobel laureates, interdisciplinary teams of world-renowned scientists seek new and innovative ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases. Fred Hutch's pioneering work in [bone marrow transplantation](#) led to the development of [immunotherapy](#), which harnesses the power of the immune system to treat cancer. An independent, nonprofit research institute based in Seattle, Fred Hutch houses the nation's first National Cancer Institute-funded cancer prevention research program, as well as the clinical coordinating center of the Women's Health Initiative and the international headquarters of the [HIV Vaccine Trials Network](#).



[Seattle Cancer Care Alliance \(SCCA\)](#) brings together the leading research teams and cancer specialists from Fred Hutch, Seattle Children's and UW Medicine — one extraordinary group whose sole purpose is the pursuit of better, longer, richer lives for our patients. Based in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood, Seattle Cancer Care Alliance has nine clinical care sites in the region, including a medical oncology clinic at EvergreenHealth in Kirkland; hematology/medical oncology and infusion services at Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue, medical and radiation oncology clinics at UW Medical Center - Northwest Seattle and medical oncology services at SCCA Issaquah, as well as Network affiliations with hospitals in five states. For more information about SCCA, visit seattlecca.org.

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