

March 5, 2020

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The Nashville community and the entire Middle Tennessee area suffered a significant impact from an early morning tornado earlier this week. Not only are many homes, businesses, schools and other property in ruins, to date 25 people have lost their lives in the storms. While we are pleased to report that our campus remained safe through the storm, we are also aware of several employees and students who lost their homes and belongings.

We are in the process of assessing the individual needs and ways to engage in providing service as is so characteristic of the Lipscomb family at times like this. Our hearts are heavy today as we continue to pray for everyone suffering as a result of the storm and as we seek to find ways to help. As you learn of student needs, please share them with Al Sturgeon, vice president for student life, and if you are aware of faculty/staff needs please share them with Christy Hooper, vice president for human resources, as they will be preparing our response.

Many have asked how to serve in relief efforts following these devastating storms and here are a few updates on how to help. We will share more as we gain information regarding the needs of our own Lipscomb family and as efforts continue:

- Pray.
- Donate supplies. We are coordinating a drive to collect several of the items identified as most needed in Nashville by Hands On Nashville; specifically, we will collect baby food, baby formula, batteries, and trash bags. Please bring those items to the Office of Spiritual Formation (bottom floor of Bennett Campus Center) next week between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, March 9-13.
- Donate money. To donate money for tornado recovery efforts, please visit the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee.
- Volunteer to help through your the Lipscomb SALT program, Lipscomb Missions, your church or a local organization like Hands on Nashville.
- Donate blood. If you would like to help the American Red Cross by donating blood, visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter your zip code to find the nearest blood drive.

Coronavirus in Middle Tennessee

While our local community continues to recover from the tornado disaster, we have learned that the first case of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been detected in Tennessee. This morning Governor Lee announced that a resident in Williamson County is quarantined at home with mild symptoms of the virus while awaiting the results of more tests.

No cases related to COVID-19 have been reported on campus nor have significant risks been identified. However, preparedness, education and prevention are critical at this moment and the Lipscomb community is ready to respond. More than two weeks ago, a small,

interdisciplinary university team composed of academic, administrative, communication and risk management personnel was formed to focus on the immediate needs and challenges of the global learning programs. This team is a subset of a larger, recently established Incident Management Team, which additionally includes representatives from the medical center, health sciences faculty, service operations, student life and the Academy, and is charged with managing campus needs during this health care difficulty. Initially, while very concerning in its continuing appearance around the world and now in Middle Tennessee, the virus is still very limited in its occurrence. To date, 126 cases have been confirmed in the United States and nine have tragically died. In contrast, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as of March 5 this season's influenza has infected as many as 45 million in the United States since October with an estimated 18,000-46,000 deaths associated with it. In reality, we need to be very vigilant of both viruses and take every precaution we can to control them as a nation and as a university community.

Resources for COVID-19 Information

Based upon what we know about the COVID-19 virus, it is transmitted both from person-to-person and from infected surfaces. [Here's a link](#) to a video produced by the College of Pharmacy that provides helpful information about the virus. The CDC has provided additional guidance that may be helpful to understand more about the COVID-19 virus and practices in your daily health hygiene that should become practices for all of us:

- [What you need to know about COVID-19](#)
- [Stop the spread of germ](#)

In addition, the Tennessee Department of Health has in depth resources available about the impacts in the state as well as other helpful information that is updated frequently. Visit the site [here](#).

How the Lipscomb Community is Preparing and Responding

Whether our students are studying on our campus or in locations thousands of miles away from Nashville, our goal of keeping our students safe and secure remains a primary focus. The university's team focused on global learning and missions has now met, almost daily, to understand and manage our response to the COVID-19 virus and its potential impact on students. The team is assisted by information from our expert partners, including the U.S. Department of State, the World Health Organization, the CDC and International SOS — our contracted international medical, security and evacuation resource and the world's leading international healthcare, medical assistance, and security services company. International SOS provides 24/7 advice and assistance through their global network with over 68,000 credentialed medical, legal, security and aviation providers operating in over 70 countries. Guidance from these resources helps inform our decisions in situations such as this where the circumstances are fluid and may change quickly.

Based on cumulative data from our expert partners, last week we relocated our global learning students from the Villa in Florence, Italy to the Mullican House in Vienna, Austria. Austria has excellent medical care and a very involved government in managing this crisis. In addition, we have limited the travel of all students in Vienna and will determine their movements on a weekly basis. Should the virus expand and the CDC risk levels increase where our students are located, we are fully prepared to end that program and bring all students back to the United States.

Members of the global learning team are also working closely with the missions area in light of the planned spring break trips. In that regard, because of some recent logistical challenges and concerns about the health of those involved in the mission trips — those we are going to serve and those going from Lipscomb — we have made the decision to cancel all university-sponsored international spring break mission travel. That is consistent with the decisions made by many other universities including Belmont, Pepperdine, Trevecca, Vanderbilt, University of Alabama and many others. Domestic mission efforts will continue generally as planned, and everyone is encouraged to exercise usual and customary health care practices.

Travel Guidelines and Recommendations

On campus, we are working on a continuous basis to proactively anticipate whatever might develop and be particularly focused on protecting members of the Lipscomb community and continuing the education of our students and employees. The Incident Management Team will make recommendations to and advise the Executive Leadership Team as this leadership team continues to provide guidance and make decisions for the entire community. As resources, policies and practices are developed, this information will be shared with the larger Lipscomb community.

In terms of employee business-related travel and other school-sponsored travel, such is fully restricted until further notice to any country or area that meets any of the following criteria:

1. Has a rating by the CDC at a Level 2 or higher, or
2. Has a rating by the U.S. Department of State at a Level 3 or higher, or
3. Is restricting or banning travel.

Any employee or student who independently visits a location that meets any of these criteria is restricted from campus for a 14-day isolation period. If this situation applies to you, employees should inform your supervisor and students should inform Dr. **Randy Bouldin**, vice provost for academics.

When traveling within the United States, general precautions should be taken and we encourage all travellers to be cognizant of less-controlled health environments such as that of airplane travel, large public events and public transportation. This would be a good opportunity to conduct business needs via teleconferencing to certainly avoid exposure to individuals who

may be sick. Those who plan on personal Spring Break travel should thoroughly research their destinations and continue to stay tuned to the [State Department](#), [CDC](#) and [World Health Organization](#) travel advisories for the most up-to-date information and follow all guidance from these organizations regarding self-quarantine policies based on travel locations visited. Employees who would like additional information from the International SOS may contact **Kathy Hargis**, associate vice president for risk management, at kathy.hargis@lipscomb.edu or 615.966.5661. As a reminder, **all university-sponsored group travel [1] , both international and domestic, should be registered with the Office of Risk Management at the very beginning of the travel planning process.** This is required for insurance coverage and for International SOS services. **Travel not registered with the Office of Risk Management is at jeopardy of being cancelled.**

What to Do if You are Sick

Along with following the CDC recommended guidelines for hygiene and health, we expect faculty and staff who may have a fever or otherwise exhibit signs of illness to isolate themselves from others in the Lipscomb community, seek assistance from their health care providers and stay home until symptoms have subsided and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication. A temperature is considered a fever in an adult at 100.4 degrees. Standard practice is to treat the symptoms which are very similar to the cold and flu viruses. This is especially critical for those in high-risk categories due to age or pre-existing health conditions.

While perhaps we are early in this serious health circumstance, it is significant that according to official sources the number of new cases of COVID-19 are declining in the Chinese epicenter and the death rate remains extraordinarily small, yet we must remain vigilant in our management of the threatening illness.

Communication and Questions

In addition, a new series of communications has been initiated. It includes the posting of relevant information online at <https://www.lipscomb.edu/student-life/health-wellness/coronavirus-covid-19> for students, employees and parents to easily access the latest developments in our preparation for this challenge. For the time being, a weekly community-wide update will be provided by email each Friday morning for an indefinite period of time. For questions about travel and other related information, contact **Kathy Hargis**, at kathy.hargis@lipscomb.edu or 615.966.5661.

We are appreciative of all of the Lipscomb employees who have stepped up to understand and manage this health threat. They have readily accepted such responsibilities and are diligent in their effort to protect our community.

Please be in prayer for members of our community impacted by the recent severe weather and those students and faculty in study abroad programs during this time.

Blessings,
Randy