

## **USM Establishes COVID Research & Innovation Task Force**

***Group Will Partner USM Expertise with Business & Innovation Community to Assist State in Current Crisis***

**Baltimore, Md. (April 20, 2020)** – University System of Maryland (USM) Chancellor Jay A. Perman is assembling a task force to leverage and mobilize systemwide research and innovations that will engage policymakers, business leaders, and the entrepreneurial community in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

USM member institutions bring to this challenge nationally ranked resources, including one of the world's top academic medical centers, leading nursing and health programs, and renowned programs in public health, public policy, computing, and engineering.

Projects are already underway across the system advancing the discovery and development of solutions: medical interventions and protocols; virology and vaccine research; engineering solutions; and IT, informatics, and artificial intelligence projects that can inform and accelerate the state's public health strategy.

Experts across the USM are also influencing Maryland's policy response and guiding the region's understanding of the disease and its impacts.

"The USM has faculty in the field," Perman said. "Their work is having profound impacts: serving populations and communities that are acutely in need; connecting people with care and counseling, with services and resources; strengthening social cohesion; and spreading hope as an antidote to despair."

The USM COVID Research & Innovation Task Force will engage with business and industry to exchange ideas and help the USM move its expertise to scale in meeting both the health and economic challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Innovation is what we do. But we can do it bigger, better, and stronger if we do it together," Perman said. "That's what Maryland's people deserve, and that's where our focus is. Therefore, we're establishing this systemwide task force to steer this essential work—to make sure that the full power of the USM can be applied at this critical moment in time."

Perman has charged the [University of Maryland Strategic Partnership](#)—the enhanced collaboration between the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)—to facilitate this effort. USM research institutions will summarize critical research projects and resources with potential to impact either transmission or treatment of COVID-19, and the task force will make connections that can advance and scale solutions.

Examples of transmission solutions include materials testing for droplet/viral particle filtration;

development of hands-free latches for opening and closing of doors; coronavirus exposure monitors; and air purification systems.

Examples of treatment solutions include the testing of therapeutic and vaccine candidates; innovations in emergency respirators and ventilators; remote home monitoring of patients with chronic respiratory illnesses; and physical therapy programs.

Four strategic activities will guide the task force: 1) mobilize resources for positive impact; 2) prepare the USM long-term to address future pandemics and other crises; 3) build awareness of the system's research and development projects centered on COVID-19; and 4) foster R&D collaborations within and outside the system.

Laurie Locascio, vice president for research at both UMCP and UMB, will serve as task force chair, with senior staffing provided by USM Vice Chancellor for Economic Development J. Thomas Sadowski.

In addition to Chancellor Perman, the task force will include UMB Interim President Bruce Jarrell, UMCP President-Designee Darryll Pines and University of Maryland, Baltimore County Vice President for Research Karl Steiner.

"There is no time more important for collaborative research," Locascio said. "This pandemic demands that researchers pull together resources and our best thinking to tackle the challenges before us, and we feel the urgency of the task at hand. Together, researchers across the University System of Maryland will work to serve our state, our region, and our world."

"To advance and scale our projects, it's incumbent upon us as a system to make connections—to facilitate collaborations among our universities, our departments, and with the state's business and innovation community," Sadowski said. "We have to help our faculty leverage each other's expertise and assets, and help industry get our ideas and technologies into established practice."

The task force also will include USM Vice Chancellor for Communications and Marketing Timothy McDonough, and UMB School of Medicine Associate Dean of Research and Administration Terry Rogers.

*The USM comprises 12 institutions: Bowie State University; Coppin State University; Frostburg State University; Salisbury University; Towson University; the University of Baltimore; the University of Maryland, Baltimore; the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science; the University of Maryland, College Park; the University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and the University of Maryland Global Campus. The USM also includes three regional centers—the Universities at Shady Grove, the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown, and the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland—at which USM universities offer upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses.*

*Systemwide, student enrollment exceeds 172,000. The USM and its institutions compete successfully nearly \$1.5 billion in external grants and contracts annually. USM institutions and programs are among the nation's best in quality and value according to several national rankings. To learn more about the University System of Maryland, visit [www.usmd.edu](http://www.usmd.edu).*

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