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June 16, 2020

**SUBJECT: INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CONTACT TRACING**

Dear Higher Education Colleagues:

As Los Angeles County moves forward along our COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery, you all have been diligently and intensely planning for the imminent resumption of in-person campus life. As we work to plan for that point, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is committed to partnering with and supporting your institutions to create campus settings that are safer environments for your students, faculty, staff, and all members of the campus community. This letter is to clarify your role in working with Public Health to contain transmission at your institutions.

While the social (physical) distancing and infection control measures required under the County's Safer at Work and in the Community Health Officer Order can be substantially effective in limiting transmission of COVID-19 on your campuses, they are not the only important disease control strategies that must be implemented to ensure minimizing the spread of this infection. In anticipation of hundreds of thousands of students and staff returning to colleges and universities across the County, Institutions of Higher Education must plan for the likelihood that there will be new cases of COVID-19 identified among their campus populations after in-person instruction and on-campus activities reopen, despite best attempts to implement all social distancing practices. In the event of such incidents, Institutions of Higher Education have an essential role in working with the Department of Public Health to contain transmission by:

1. Developing a plan for containing of an outbreak that occurs on campus and among the institution's employees and students.
2. Ensuring robust communication protocols are in place to rapidly communicate with all employees, students, and the public before, during, and after an outbreak of COVID-19.
3. Developing plans to quickly isolate confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 and [assuring they are isolated until they are no longer likely to spread the disease to others](#);
4. Assisting Public Health with access to lists of and contact information for all who may have had close contact with the case, e.g. class lists, on-campus roommates, employee lists, and any other requested information that helps Public Health identify and interview cases and close contacts.
5. Working with Public Health, as requested, to ensure that all exposed individuals (contacts) are notified of their potential exposure and risk for developing the disease while protecting the case's privacy;
6. Assuring that all close contacts are quarantined and adhering to the Health Officer's Quarantine Order;
7. Providing targeted testing of all close contacts;
8. Assuring those who are isolated and quarantined are receiving the services and resources that they need.

Higher Education Colleagues  
June 16, 2020  
Page 2

Public Health has built an expanded contact tracing system and program to perform this work countywide. For containment to work, we need the cooperation, engagement, and leadership of our partners in the education sector when cases occur on your campuses or among your employees and students. The ability to effectively contain the case clusters in these instances depends greatly on the speed and efficiency of these coordinated response activities by both Public Health and your Institution. Timeliness in the identification of those infected and exposed and communication on how to stop the chain of transmission will lead to success.

We are finalizing protocols and webinars intended specifically for Institutions of Higher Education on how to support Public Health during an outbreak. As these programs are launched across LA County, we look forward to our ongoing and regular communication with you to understand challenges and identify solutions that will inform continuous quality improvement of our outbreak response in LA County.

Public Health is appreciative of the partnership with Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 public health response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Muntu Davis', followed by the text 'MD, MPH'.

Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.  
Health Officer