



CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE | February 9

Emory's commitment to the health and safety of our community is our highest priority. As we monitor the COVID-19 pandemic, our healthcare workers, researchers, and students, are taking action to combat this novel coronavirus.

Current COVID-19 funding awarded to Emory University: ~ \$132 million

Emory Healthcare COVID-19 Data

Total COVID-19-positive admissions: 10,617

Total COVID-19-positive discharges: 9,547

Survival rate of admitted patients: 92%

Total vaccine doses administered: 43,672

**Data is as of February 8, 2021*

COVID test, validated at Emory, under \$231 million federal contract

The Biden administration has cut a \$231.8 million deal to boost availability of the first at-home rapid test for COVID-19. The 15-minute at-home COVID-19 test was developed by [Ellume](#), an Australian company, and was tested through the NIH-funded [Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics \(RADx\)](#) initiative, led by Emory University researchers. The RADx program began work in Spring 2020 to test prospective COVID-19 testing technology that showed promise for point-of-care or lab-based use. The Ellume device received emergency authorization from the FDA in December after it showed 96% accuracy in a U.S. clinical study that included both adults and children of ages 2 years and older. The test uses a short nasal swab to collect a sample, which is then put into a digital analyzer linked to a smartphone app. Ellume will deliver 100,000 tests per month from the Australian manufacturing facility until a U.S. facility is built. After which, it will produce more than 500,000 tests per day. The first shipment of 100,000 tests will be by the end of the month.

Be an original cosponsor on the Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE)

Act

With the current shutdown of many university-based laboratories and national laboratories due to the pandemic, we are deeply concerned that the people who comprise the backbone of the U.S. research enterprise – graduate students, postdocs, principal investigators, and technical support staff – are at risk of losing their employment. The RISE Act authorizes approximately \$25 billion in emergency relief appropriations for federal science agencies to support pandemic-related research gaps during FY21. *117th Original Cosponsors (37): DeGette, Upton, Johnson, Eshoo, Gonzalez (OH), Baird, Beatty, Beyer, Blumenauer, Bonamici, Brownley, Burgess, Butterfield, Carbajal, Casten, Cohen, Cole (OK), Cooper, DelBene, Espallat, Fitzpatrick, Khanna, Lamb, Lucas, C. Maloney, Matsui, Morelle, Nadler, Perlmutter, Peters, Rush, Sarbanes, Sherman, Swalwell, Weber, Welch.*

If you would like to cosponsor the RISE Act, or have any questions, please contact Matthew Allen (DeGette) at matthew.allen@mail.house.gov or Stephanie DeMarco (Upton) at stephanie.demarco@mail.house.gov.

Emory-developed COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective in animal models

Researchers at Yerkes National Primate Research Center and Emory Vaccine Center have developed a COVID-19 vaccine that has proven safe and effective in mice and monkeys. The Emory COVID-19 vaccine induces protective immunity using modified vaccinia Ankara (MVA), a harmless version of a poxvirus that is well-known for its use in HIV/AIDS vaccines. The MVA COVID-19 vaccine induces neutralizing antibodies and activates a type of immune cell in the body, called CD8+ T cells, which clear infected cells and are key in fighting other variants of the virus. The results, published last week in [Immunity](#), show that MVA/S-vaccinated animals were protected against lung inflammation and immune cell abnormalities in the lung, which physicians have seen in COVID-19 patients. The Emory research team will continue their work on COVID-19 vaccines, with one study focusing on the effectiveness of a single dose of the Emory MVA COVID-19 vaccine and another study focusing on inducing broader T cell responses capable of fighting new COVID-19 variants.

Emory research shows COVID-19 community exposure and race as greatest risk factors for positive antibody tests in health care workers

New research from Emory University showed that exposure to people with COVID-19 outside the workplace, as well as Black race, were the strongest predictors of positive COVID-19 antibody tests, also known as seropositivity, in health care workers. In the study, published last week in the [Annals of Internal Medicine](#), Emory Healthcare employees and medical staff were offered free COVID-19 antibody testing and had to complete a survey describing use of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as possible exposure to COVID-19 inside and outside the workplace. A total of 10,275 health care workers (35 percent of the Emory Healthcare workforce) participated in the testing and survey. Antibody testing showed that approximately 3.8 percent of employees/medical staff had antibodies indicating SARS-CoV-2

seropositivity. The researchers determined that living in a zip code with higher COVID-19 incidence increased the risk of seropositivity to SARS-CoV-2, with Black individuals at particularly high risk; however, they found few risk factors for infection in the workplace. Looking ahead, the authors state that ongoing efforts to keep the health care workforce safe should emphasize risk mitigation both inside and outside of the workplace.

Emory researchers launch COVID-19 Vaccination Tracker

Emory researchers recently added an additional feature to the [COVID-19 Health Equity Dashboard](#) that now allows users to track vaccination rates across the country. The COVID-19 Health Equity Dashboard was created last year by an interdisciplinary group of Emory researchers, clinicians, and students with the goal of facilitating easy comparisons of counties across the country with respect to COVID-19 outcomes and social determinants. The Dashboard will continue to be updated as new data is released. Click [here](#), to learn more about the Dashboard and advancing health equity in a pandemic from Emory public health expert Dr. Shivani Patel and emergency medicine physician Dr. Monique Smith.

Atlanta Falcons invite local health care heroes to attend Super Bowl LV

As a “thank you” for their hard work and service throughout the pandemic, 23 local health care heroes were selected to attend last weekend’s Super Bowl LV in Tampa Bay as guests of the Falcons. The health care workers were picked by Emory Healthcare and Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta through a random drawing of all healthcare workers who were vaccinated by a deadline specified by the NFL. Select vaccinated health care workers from around the country, including local health care heroes invited by 32 NFL Clubs, took part in various Super Bowl LV festivities at Raymond James Stadium, all in accordance with CDC and local health guidelines. Among the fifteen selected Emory Healthcare workers were an emergency room nurse, an ICU nurse, a cardiac nurse tech, a physical therapist and a patient care assistant.

If you need an Emory expert for a tele- town hall, please reach out!

Through our work with other members of the National Ebola Training and Education Center (NETEC), we have developed a [NETEC Resource Repository](#) with materials that specifically pertain to COVID-19. We encourage you to share this repository with your local hospitals and healthcare facilities.