Q&A Session for Resumption of On-Site Research Activities - June 25, 2020

Starting Comments:

1) Please note that in anticipation of Phase 4 of the Governor’s Restore Illinois Phasing Plan beginning on June 26, Dr. Kaplan indicated that the current guidelines in place were created to last through at least August and likely beyond barring any new surge in infections. Therefore, no changes are anticipated at this time.

2) A member of the audience indicated kudos to Bob Jackson, Patty Loomis and all the staff who were instrumental in getting hand wipe systems in place by the doors entering/exiting the laboratory areas.

Q: When/how will we get the cloth masks that were promised?

A: Vince Butera/John Nylen are working on these. As soon as RFU receives them, they will be distributed to the lab personnel.

Q: What kind of cleaning are the Harvard Maintenance staff doing at night?

A: Normal routine cleaning. Every laboratory is required to sanitize their own bench tops.

Harvard will clean touch points (doorknobs, elevator buttons, etc.) and mop/sweep floors. Each researcher is expected to disinfect their lab area before and after use. The redundancy helps to prevent COVID spread/contamination. Trash should be put in the hallways and boxes should be clearly marked with signage obtained from facilities.

Q: How are we to get the face shields?

A: All shields have been distributed to each Center per Mitch Beales. Be advised that while the shields are disposable they can in fact be re-used a number of times. If others are in need of face shields please contact Dr. Kaplan’s office. Dr. Kaplan sent an email with information on the method for cleaning the shields.

Q: Is Security still supplying the water bottles?

A: No – Researchers are advised to bring their own drinking water. Bob Jackson along with facilities are working to install/upgrade all water fountains so that they are capable of bottle fill stations. All mouthpieces will be removed and only filling fountains will be available. This is a work in progress and should be completed within a month.

Q: Will additional COVID testing be required down the road?
A: It is unclear at this time. We will continue to follow infection trends, guidance from the CDC and the Illinois Department of Public Health. Interestingly, the Lake County Health Department has received funding for testing/tracing.

Final Note:

Upon entering Phase 4 and more things opening up, Dr. Kaplan cautioned to please not become lax in your social distancing and wearing of masks and face shields. You must be vigilant for your safety and those of our colleagues.