



Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

March 27, 2020

Dear CMSRU Students, Faculty, and Staff:

We've made it through our first week of delivering educational content online and I'm pleased to report that, overall, things went very well. I'm cautiously optimistic that this temporary strategy will continue to be successful. Our Office of Medical Education, faculty, and IT Department put in a great deal of work behind the scenes to ensure the quality and integrity of the curriculum, and I'm grateful to them for all they have done and continue to do. In addition, I'd like to thank our students, as well as our faculty, for their flexibility and cooperation as we continue to adapt to our "new normal."

We are continuing to explore and identify learning opportunities for our M3 students to be involved in remote clinical work through telehealth. More information on those opportunities will be forthcoming from our Office of Medical Education.

In an effort to help augment the physician workforce in preparation for the expected surge of coronavirus patients, CMSRU's leadership team is actively pursuing early graduation for M4 students who have completed their requirements and would like to move on to their residency positions earlier. We are currently addressing all the residual concerns that we believe could arise from this important decision. We hope to have further information about this in the near future.

CMSRU students continue to make us proud through their volunteer initiatives. Three CMSRU M4s are currently working with our clinical faculty, including Dr. Emily Damuth, on a new program, *CritiCall Connections*. This program will help address communication gaps between the families of patients hospitalized in Cooper's ICU and the critical care team - an unintended consequence of the strict visitor policies implemented at hospitals because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Wednesday, I shared with you positive news about a team of our medical students collaborating with faculty and students from the Rowan College of Engineering and other Rowan colleges to produce a reusable face mask. Those students include: M3 students Deep Patel, Matt Ratti, James Dechiara, Riddhi Ghandi, Avril Betances, and Brenda Arthur; M2 students Nick Cho, Savina Reid, Sam Hofbauer, Maya Patel, Matt Goldner, and Dan Depolo; and M1 students Lena Chatterjee, Alex Wang, Mandi Liu, and Kristian Quevada. The prototype for the new mask is now being tested by some medical providers at Cooper and Inspira. [Click here to read more about this noteworthy initiative](#)

Other CMSRU students, under the direction of Lauren Burgoon, are getting businesses to donate masks and gloves, and some students are making cloth masks or sending information to us about vendors for potential masks. We appreciate all of our students' efforts tremendously.

Unfortunately, because of the uncertain financial environment in which we now find ourselves, Rowan University has announced that it is temporarily suspending its seed funding research program, The Camden Health Research Initiative. The awardees from our

faculty and partners have been notified. Each research team worked hard to develop well-written and thoughtful proposals, and I share in their disappointment about this setback. We will be sure to update everyone as soon as there is a change in the status of that program.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our clinical partner, Cooper University Health Care. Yesterday, the N.J. State Commissioner of Health announced that Cooper was named to coordinate the surge response by South Jersey health systems to the coronavirus pandemic. One of three coordinating entities named statewide in anticipation of the surge of coronavirus patients and the need for critical care beds, Cooper was selected based on its status as South Jersey's Level 1 trauma center. I'm proud of our clinical faculty and thank them for all they do for our students and the patients of our region.

Best wishes for a peaceful weekend and continued good health to you and your families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annette C. Reboli, M.D.".

Annette C. Reboli, MD
Dean and Professor of Medicine