

## MUSC Health is 1st hospital in SC to do its own COVID-19 testing

BY HELEN ADAMS

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MUSC Health at MUSC has become the first hospital/medical center in the state capable of doing its own COVID-19 testing.

Danielle Scheurer, M.D., chief quality officer for MUSC Health, said in-house testing started March 23. “Not only can we accommodate our entire internal demand for the entire system – both inpatient and outpatient for all of our five hospitals – we’ve also been able to accommodate some of our local hospitals and affiliate partners.”

Before March 23, MUSC Health had to send specimens to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and private labs

See **TESTING** on page 9

### Suspension of print version of The MUSC Catalyst News due to COVID-19 pandemic

The MUSC Office of Public Affairs and Media Relations will suspend the printing, delivery and distribution of its bimonthly publication, The MUSC Catalyst News, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your safety and that of our MUSC employees, students and delivery carriers is critically important. We are committed to keeping our readers informed about the latest novel coronavirus news and other important information that affects the MUSC community. Therefore, starting April 3, we will rely on the online version of our publication. Visit the link under “MUSC Catalyst News in Print” at <https://web.musc.edu/about/news-center>.



John Yost and Joshua Kim model the first and second prototypes of the 3D printed masks created by a multidisciplinary team at MUSC.

Photo by Sarah Pack

## MUSC team releases plan for 3D printed masks

BY LESLIE CANTU

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With the threat of a shortage of protective masks looming as the novel coronavirus pandemic grows, MUSC biomedical engineers and tinkerers had an inspired idea: unleash an army of makers from across the U.S. who could make such masks from 3D printers – a technology that, in recent years, has become widely available.

“High schools have a printer capable of making this,” said Michael Yost, Ph.D., vice chairman of research in the Department of Surgery. “Let’s make this so simple that a high schooler could do it, yet effective to protect our people.”

In a matter of days, a team came together and developed the Self-Assembly Filtration for Emergencies, or SAFE, Cartridge System. The system could be used by medical professionals or by people who just need to go to the grocery store.

The team has been in contact with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to obtain emergency approval of the device.

Yost said the team is talking to manufacturers to see if the design can be mass produced.

The N95 masks that are currently in such short supply are essentially filters molded into mask form. Recreating those masks exactly proved too difficult. So instead, the team created a two-part solution: a 3D printed mask that can be cleaned and reused that will work in tandem with a 3D printed disposable filter cartridge. Alternatively, the filter cartridge could be used with an adapted hospital mask.

Joshua Kim, senior designer and program coordinator in the Department of Surgery Human Centered Design Program, said he was inspired by the NASA engineers during the Apollo 13 disaster, who quickly devised a makeshift carbon dioxide removal system from materials on hand inside the lunar module, including duct tape and plastic.

See **MASKS** on page 3

**4** MUSC Resiliency Clinic  
Resources available to help  
with employee self-care.

**6** Women’s History Month  
Medical student learned to  
cope.

**3** Life after COVID-19 surge  
**5** Meet Brooke Trevino  
**10** Health and Well-Being

# Signs of support warm hearts of COVID-19 drive-through site, other MUSC Health locations

By HELEN ADAMS

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When Erik Modrzynski got an email saying somebody had “decorated” the fence of the MUSC Health drive-through coronavirus sample collection site, the emergency manager was worried.

“I kind of panicked, thinking maybe somebody spray-painted it or something along those lines. But then we saw it was beautiful messages from people.”

Sign after sign had been posted on the metal fence in the Citadel Mall parking lot.

“You are amazing. Thanks for braving the coronavirus,” one said.

Another read, “Thank you for your service.” It was aimed at the dozens of nurses and other health care workers staffing the site, many in hazmat-style suits at a time when temperatures can creep above 80 degrees.

A third sign simply said, “Feel better,” to the hundreds of South Carolinians coming to the drive-through sample collection site each day to have their noses swabbed for evidence of COVID-19.

The messages hit home at a place where life hasn’t stopped as it has for many in our state. In health care, life



Photos by Sarah Pack

## MUSC Health employees read encouraging messages on the fence surrounding the COVID-19 specimen collection site at Citadel Mall.



## Handwritten signs give encouraging messages to MUSC Health employees and anxious patients being tested for COVID-19.



through MUSC Health site.

“It’s surreal, to be honest,” the emergency manager said. “You train for this. You think of different plans. But when’s the last time we had something like this happen?”

Messages of support, which have also cropped up on the main MUSC Health campus in downtown Charleston, are a reminder that health care workers’ hard work hasn’t gone unnoticed.

Modrzynski said those workers are grateful for the kind gestures. “I feel like our nurses here have a mission in mind, and that’s what they’re working toward, which is helping people. It’s fantastic.”

If you’d like to help in the fight against COVID-19 in South Carolina, check out the MUSC Health coronavirus donation page at [muschealth.org/patients-visitors/coronavirus-information/donations-to-musc-health](https://muschealth.org/patients-visitors/coronavirus-information/donations-to-musc-health).

is on overdrive as doctors, nurses and others know they can’t stay home. They have to walk toward the crisis.

“We see a lot of patients,” Modrzynski said. “We’re growing on a daily basis. Today, I think we have 400 patients scheduled.” That’s 400 people on a single day being swabbed at the drive-

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## Provost Office’s Faculty Award nominations due April 8

The Provost’s Office is seeking faculty award nominations to recognize faculty who have made outstanding contributions to MUSC’s teaching mission. The nomination deadline is Wednesday, April 8. Award categories include the following: Teaching Excellence, Outstanding Clinician, Developing Scholar, Distinguished Faculty

Service and the Peggy Schachte Research Mentor Award. Any regular full-time faculty member who holds an academic rank of instructor or higher in a college or department at MUSC and has not been the recipient of the award within the previous three years is eligible for nomination. For information, visit <https://education.musc.edu/faculty/faculty-awards>.

# After the wave: Life beyond the inevitable COVID-19 surge

*Editor's Note: The following commentary was published in the March 30, 2020 opinion page of The Post and Courier.*

By DAVID J. COLE, M.D., FACS

MUSC President

As president of an academic health sciences center, cancer surgeon, scientist, colleague, husband, father and friend, not a minute goes by that I'm not thinking about the impact of COVID-19.

While it's not easy to handle the many unknowns associated with this virus, it is imperative to recognize that we, as a local and global community, can and will move forward from this moment. We can find confidence in all the various ways that individuals, families, friends, hospitals and health care systems, higher education institutions, businesses – large and small – and community and state leaders are working toward a crucial common goal: to flatten the curve in South Carolina.

This, rightly so, has been the primary focus of state and local leaders over the last several weeks and will continue to be a priority for the near future. By individuals choosing to follow state and local ordinances, by sacrificing now, we're giving all health care providers, first responders and our communities a much better chance to overcome the COVID-19 wave heading toward our "beach."

Each of us must continue to do everything we can to make sure our

efforts align with the price being paid by so many people.

Our early projections, using MUSC research and disease-modeling expertise, would suggest that we will not fully realize the impact of our current actions for another several weeks.

By then, we'll know more accurately how much we were able to flatten the curve and deter the spread of this destructive virus. Thank you for what you are doing, which will have a measurable and positive impact on our future.

As we move forward, it is important to understand that we are not just facing one wave, meaning the potential of a surge in COVID-19 patients in our community that leads to overwhelming hospitalizations and preventable deaths. We face a second and equally challenging wave – the immediate hardships and long-lasting ripple effects associated with economic disruptions.

If we don't stay home now, the health crisis wave will be bigger, stronger and harder to combat. At the same time, a prolonged stay-at-home response will lead to overwhelming long-term economic hardship.

turn off the TV and radio). There's a lot of ambient noise outside (traffic, birds, dogs, wind) so it's not ideal.

Note that this video will be shared publicly, so please ensure you are representing MUSC professionally. (Clean T-shirts are OK). Also confirm there is no personally identifying information is on your computer screens or paperwork. For information, Email [cantul@musc.edu](mailto:cantul@musc.edu), [donovanb@musc.edu](mailto:donovanb@musc.edu) or [packsa@musc.edu](mailto:packsa@musc.edu).



Cole

## MASKS *Continued from Page One*

"How can we utilize materials that people can get at a local hardware store and repurpose those materials to make protective equipment?" he asked.

The "95" in N95 means these masks filter 95% of particulates of a certain size, he explained. HEPA filters, like those used in air purifiers, filter around 99% of particulates. So he bought a HEPA filter and set about experimenting. Using the same testing that's used on N95 masks, he found that using those filters in the homemade cartridge did work – a positive sign that they were on the right track.

Meanwhile, another group was working on creating the masks. Dentists Walter Renne, D.M.D., and Christian Brenes Vega, D.D.S., regularly use 3D printing. "It's just a part of the job," said Renne, who estimated that 20% of dentists and 90% of dental labs have a 3D printer on hand. They enlisted the help of John Yost, a student and independent contractor who serves as a resource for all things associated with 3D printing on campus.

Initially, they developed different prototypes that would work with different types of filters, including filters used by painters or people dealing with asbestos. They 3D scanned a mask to get the basic shape, then designed modifications so the mask could accommodate the disposable filter cartridge. The filter, noted Brenes Vega, is the most important part. Unfortunately, some people have turned to masks that aren't actually offering protection, he said.

Finally, they needed to solve the problem of releasing air pressure, Kim said. The filters are so effective that when the wearer exhales, the air will go to the area of least resistance to escape – in other words, not through the filter again but by causing the mask to lift slightly off the wearer's face. That exposes the wearer to the outside air and renders the mask worthless, Renne said. In response, the team installed a rubber valve, commonly used in other medical

applications, that allows the exhaled air to escape the mask. As soon as the wearer inhales, the valve immediately shuts, Kim said, protecting the wearer.

Kim said that, for additional sealing and comfort, they added strips of neoprene weatherstripping foam around the edges of the mask. The foam provides a comfortable fit so the wearer's skin isn't touching the plastic mask and ensures it contours to the face as the wearer moves or talks.

With all the parts in place – the 3D printed mask and 3D printed cartridge fitted with a hand-cut HEPA filter and rubber valve – the group began fit-testing.

They took four prototypes to the Emergency Department and tested them on several users. So far, the masks have fit everyone, Yost said, although they want to expand their testing to include more face sizes and shapes.

The team is already printing masks at MUSC, even as they continue to perfect the design.

The biggest obstacle now is the time it takes to create the masks. MUSC's 3D printers aren't production-level printers. They're meant for creating prototypes when time isn't of the essence. It takes about four to five hours to print a mask and then about an hour to assemble everything.

Because of that time element, Yost is talking to manufacturers who could produce these in greater numbers. But the team is also openly releasing the plans so that anyone with a 3D printer can produce the masks.

In addition to creating the entire mask, makers could create just the disposable cartridge, which can be adapted to fit into the masks used in anesthesiology to deliver oxygen to patients.

### Blood Connection to host blood drive at MUSC

The Blood Connection will host blood drives from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on April 8, 9 and 10 at the Charleston Center, next to the MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital. To sign up or for more information, visit [https://donate.thebloodconnection.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/145327](https://donate.thebloodconnection.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/145327).

## Employee videos needed supporting flatten the curve at home

MUSC employees, how are you helping to #flattenthecurve by working at home? Take a quick video of yourself in your at-home work environment.

Your work doesn't have to be directly related to COVID-19. Show us how you're doing your part.

Quick tips: Record yourself via WebEx or have a partner take a cell phone video (limit to 10 to 15 seconds). If you use a cell phone, make sure the phone is horizontal. Record indoors (remember to

# MUSC launches COVID-19 Resiliency Clinic as a support

BY DEBORAH REYNOLDS

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The fight against COVID-19 is a full-time job for many in our MUSC family. The virus takes no breaks, nor does it relent so those responding to it can take care of themselves. There are few breaks – physically or mentally – for those on the front lines. And for those adjusting to their “new normal,” working remotely, homeschooling, elder care and other responsibilities in addition to their day jobs, these changes can produce new challenges and likely few opportunities for self-care.

Managing stress and fostering resilience are essential to our ability to provide ongoing care to others while sustaining our own strength and well-being. The MUSC Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences has developed resources and services for MUSC, MUSC Health and MUSCP employees who are experiencing the mental and emotional toll of this insidious virus.

Alyssa Rheingold, Ph.D., director of clinical operations at the National Crime Victim's Research and Treatment Center and associate director of the sleep and anxiety program, helped to lead the effort to launch what she and colleagues hope will be an invaluable resource to all at MUSC who need it.

“We recognize the importance of our frontline health care providers and want to ensure they are well taken care of. Increased anxiety and stress are normal given the circumstances. However, if stress starts to impact functioning or feel overwhelming, seeking assistance and support can be essential to mitigating long-term difficulties,” said Rheingold. “The COVID-19 Resiliency Clinic is a way to hopefully bolster resilience in the face of this significant demand. We are trying to do our part to support our MUSC family as we work together to best serve our community.”

The newly offered resources are housed in the COVID-19 Resiliency Clinic and are designed to help the MUSC family

manage COVID-19-related stress and anxiety. The clinic is part of the Sleep and Anxiety Treatment and Research Program. Counselors will provide brief individual telehealth interventions to help employees bolster their resilience. The COVID-19 Resiliency Clinic will also host regular virtual webinars featuring strategies for stress management, coping and fostering a sense of well-being during this challenging time.

Melissa Milanak, Ph.D., clinic coordinator for the Sleep and Anxiety Treatment and Research Program, was equally instrumental in launching the timely well-being effort. She said that as MUSC health care providers work tirelessly to help this community, she and her colleagues wanted to provide a way to support them.

“Health care providers are impacted in new ways by this pandemic, and the clinic gives them an opportunity to process stressful circumstances and focus on their strength and resiliency overcoming unprecedented obstacles,” said Milanak.

At no cost, MUSC, MUHA and MUSCP employees can be seen for these COVID-19-specific stress management and resiliency sessions via telehealth clinical support appointments. The sessions will focus on learning tools to manage and cope with stressors related to COVID-19 care.

Rheingold and Milanak are pleased that colleagues were wholeheartedly willing to aid in the effort.

“We have had an outpouring of mental health providers from the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences volunteering their time to make sure that every MUSC health care provider who would like to take advantage of the Resiliency Clinic can



Milanak



Photo by Sarah Pack

**An MUSC Heath team don PPE suits in preparation for patient specimen collection at the MUSC Health respiratory specimen collection site outside MUSC Health West Ashley Medical Pavilion.**

have an appointment as quickly as possible,” Milanak explained. “It is during these challenging times that we see the strength of our MUSC family coming together to support one another as we do our best to serve our patients and community.”

## MUSC Employee Support Resources

### ❑ MUSC COVID-19 Resiliency Clinic

For more information, contact Melissa Milanak at milanak@musc.edu or 843-792-0042.

*Additional Mental and Emotional Well-being Resources*

### ❑ MUSC COVID-19 Information Collective

Via MUSC Horseshoe Intranet:

<https://horseshoe.musc.edu/everyone/well-being>.

### ❑ The Sleep and Anxiety Research and Treatment Center

MUSC, MUHA and MUSCP faculty and staff can get evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy and medication management via telehealth for sleep and anxiety-related difficulties.

Contact Melissa Milanak at milanak@musc.edu or 843-792-0042.

### ❑ MUSC Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

MUSC, MUHA and MUSCP faculty and employees and their families can be seen for free short-term counseling. An operator is available 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Sessions are by appointment only. Contact Jeni Bowers-Palmer at bowersj@musc.edu or 843-792-2848.

### ❑ MUSC Chaplaincy/ Pastoral Care Services

On-site service is available 24/7. Call 792-9464 or page 18089 for University Hospital, 17265 for Ashley River Tower or 17075 for SJCH.

## MEET BROOKE



**Brooke Trevino**

**Department; How long at MUSC**  
 MUSC Foundation for Research  
 Development; 1.5 years

**How are you changing what's possible  
 at MUSC**

*I assist the department's director and managers in helping MUSC innovators facilitate the translation of their discoveries into products and services for the public's benefit.*

**Family and pets**

*Husband, Jason; daughter, Carson; sons, Cash and Lane; dogs, Mack and Kimora; and cats, Matilda, Nova and Carlos*

**Who in history would you most like to meet and why**

*Austrian symbolist painter Gustav Klimt — my favorite artist*

**Favorite restaurant**

*Justine's Kitchen*

**Favorite quote or words of advice**

*"The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better."*

— Robert Kennedy

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Visit [www.musc.edu/iu](http://www.musc.edu/iu) to start today!

FOR QUESTIONS OR PROGRAM SUPPORT: [IMAGINE-U@MUSC.EDU](mailto:IMAGINE-U@MUSC.EDU)

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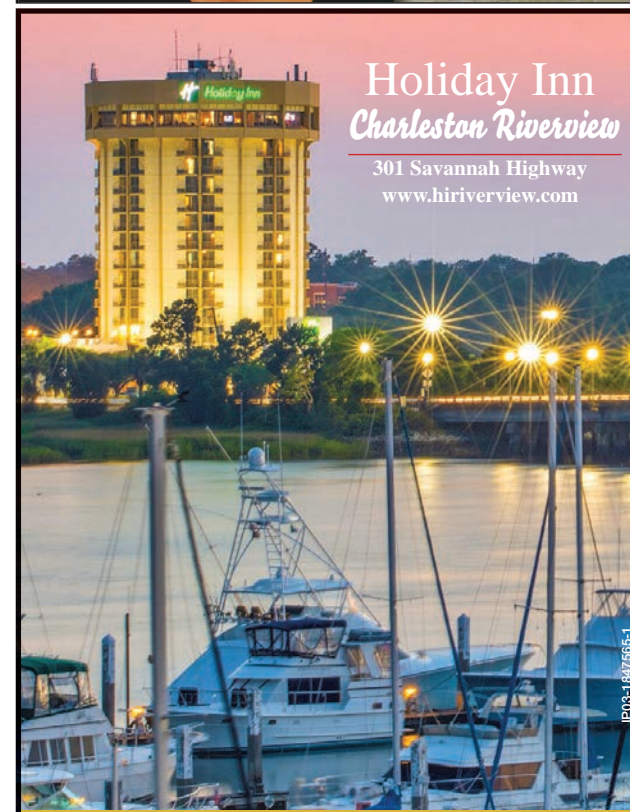
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*MUSC Women's History Month***She always knew she was different. In med school she found out why.**

Each year, nation celebrates National Women's History Month to honor and celebrate the undeniable contributions women have made throughout time – in both good times and those that challenge the will.

MUSC honors women every spring for all they do day in and day out to make the institution exceptional. Women from all corners of the institution are critical during this particularly unsettling time. Their voices are heard and respected, their contributions unquestionably appreciated. We draw strength and inspiration from these remarkable women who work among us and, over the next few issues, we will feature stories of women whose impact is felt in meaningful ways.

BY HELEN ADAMS

adamshel@musc.edu

When MUSC student Melanie Wiley works with children on the autism spectrum, she knows what they're going through. She was diagnosed with autism during her second year of medical school.

"I was really struggling," she said. "I was way overstimulated during class, clinic and exams. Basically everywhere."

On test days, she was distracted by sounds other students made, such as clicking on keyboards, perfume and fluorescent lights. It's a problem known as sensory overload that affects people on the spectrum.

And the techniques she'd developed over a lifetime of test taking, including a multistep process for approaching each question to make sure she didn't miss any of the nuances that sometimes escaped her, were time consuming. That was a problem when it came to tests with time limits.

"I was confident in my knowledge but struggled with exams," she said.

Wiley realized that her sensory differences, along with the inflexibility that made it hard for her to stop working on one problem and move to the next, were things she needed help with. She also realized it was time to find out whether these two things were connected to some of her other characteristics.

Her innate candor, for example. "As a child, I learned maybe I should just stop saying things. I didn't know why, but whenever I talked, it didn't go well. I can be very blunt and concrete."

Her nonverbal communication skills were atypical, too. "When I was in college, before I had a diagnosis, people would come up to me and say, 'What's wrong?' And I was having the best day, ever. They just couldn't tell it from my expression."

Her solution? Practice. The inflexibility that she would later learn was part of being autistic meant she



Photo by Sarah Pack

**College of Medicine student Melanie Wiley on the MUSC campus in Charleston.**

*"She is so talented and hardworking and yet also willing to be vulnerable by sharing her personal struggles for the benefit of others."*

**Frampton Gwynette, M.D.**

never gave up. She used her resilience to find solutions.

"I took modeling classes because I felt like I walked awkwardly," she said. "I'm going to learn how to walk. I'm going to figure it out," she told herself.

"I talked in the mirror and did selfies before selfies were a thing. I had this down to a science. Now, when I tell someone, 'Hello,' I know how my voice sounds and face feels," she said with a big smile, as if she were greeting someone. "It feels really goofy to me, but I know it looks OK."

The summer after her first year in medical school, Wiley got tested for autism. The three-month process included examining her childhood history, interviews with her mother, testing and extensive discussions between Wiley and an autism specialist.

"I found out I was autistic. That changed a lot of things," she said. "Now I had this whole new way to think about how I learn and process things. I could reconstruct my whole schedule and approach, making a life change to set myself up for success."

Wiley took a break from medical school to process what she'd learned about herself. But she didn't take a break from science.

Wiley, who is pursuing both a medical degree and a doctorate at MUSC to become a physician scientist, worked with child and adolescent psychiatrist Frampton Gwynette, M.D., on a study during her time off. It tested transcranial magnetic stimulation as a possible treatment for depression in autistic adults.

Wiley loved the work. It reminded her of why she wanted to earn dual degrees to help vulnerable people, including autistic children and adults. "Being so different from your peers and the accompanying social isolation is painful. We know clinically that depression is more common in the autism community and can be more severe and less responsive to traditional treatments."

Gwynette, an associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, said he learned more about autism from Wiley than any book or article he'd ever read. "She is so talented and hardworking and yet also willing to be vulnerable by sharing her personal struggles for the benefit of others."

Wiley also started a program for autistic children called the Project Rex Hangout and became a mentor. "Working with adolescent girls and boys on the spectrum as they navigate some things that they're going through – that I did, too – is helpful. It's good to know you're not the only one."

She went on to join the board of the South Carolina

Letter from the  
Office of the

## PROVOST

Dear faculty, staff and students,

As the chief academic officer for MUSC, I have been privileged to hear about some creative and imaginative ideas that you have initiated to help to deal with the challenges of COVID-19. However, few people get to hear about these fantastic efforts, and I am sure that I am missing many myself. Therefore, my plan is to create a special provost newsletter each week to share your ideas with the MUSC community, and I am soliciting ideas in three topic areas.

1. Initiatives you have created to support each other during this time of social isolation, i.e., joint virtual exercise classes.
2. Education innovations you have created to enhance online learning and student engagement.
3. Research initiatives that you have developed and implemented to combat COVID-19.

Please submit a very brief description of your initiative (no more than a few sentences or short paragraph) to wiltj@muscd.edu by Thursday at noon of this week for your ideas to be considered for this week's edition. Please include your unit, department, college, program or other identifier, i.e., facilities or student programs or College of Medicine class of 2021, etc., and the names of any team members who are co-creators.

My goals are simple. I want to be able to share your ideas so that others may learn from you and maybe even adopt your ideas, inspire others to create additional new ideas and provide our MUSC family with an additional source of pride as we all gain an enhanced appreciation for each other.

Please share your ideas so that we can recognize and celebrate you. No idea or action is too small to be considered.

Thank you for all you continue to do during these difficult times.



Saladin

Lisa Saladin, PT, Ph.D.,

Executive vice president for academic affairs and provost

James W. Colbert Endowed Chair

AUTISM *Continued from Page Six*

Autism Society and became a public speaker to advocate for autistic people.

When Wiley returned to school, her autism diagnosis meant she qualified for accommodations, including a quiet space for testing and additional time to complete exams. She also helped to start a campus organization for students with disabilities and their allies called the Alliance for Disability Advocacy.

Wiley's diagnosis also gave her a new perspective when she worked with patients. "I've learned about the abilities of both nonverbal and verbal people on the spectrum. We are all unique in our abilities and struggles. It's a spectrum, and there are a lot of similarities. I see myself in all these different people."

She said she also realized that there's reason to appreciate some of autism's traits, such as determination. "I think the inflexibility has allowed me to stick with school even when it looked to some people like I should quit."

And her sensory differences make her aware of other people's need for personal space – including parents and patients. "I wouldn't want to get rid of that. A lot of people aren't sensitive to others' personal space when they need to be."

Wiley knows her experiences will serve her well in the future when she fulfills her lifelong dream of becoming a physician/scientist. "I don't remember when I didn't want to be a doctor," she said.

## CMD Greenway set to install synthetic turf

Many exciting developments are in progress at the Charleston Medical District Greenway. With its second phase well underway, the transition from hardscape to landscape began April 1. The installation of synthetic turf will be the start of a domino effect to finish out phase II for the CMD Greenway, as the asphalt by the food trucks will be repainted, and the permanent food vendor kiosks will shortly follow in the old Public Safety parking lot.

Phase I of the Charleston Medical District tactical urbanism project was completed in 2017. The first phase included closing part of Doughty Street, painting the asphalt green and lining the Greenway with trees in large planters, all in preparation for the asphalt to be removed and turf installed after the opening of the Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital and Pearl Tourville Women's Pavilion. Phase 2 has included installing a deck and beautiful brick sidewalk on the Greenway, providing Wi-Fi and, now, adding even more green with the installation of artificial turf.

Since the opening of the new hospital, more than 50% of the cypress trees have been planted, and the City of Charleston has approved synthetic turf installation. Phase II will wrap up at the end of 2020 with the construction of two permanent food vendor kiosks.

Artificial turf installation provides an excellent opportunity to be environmentally conscious, as it made up of several layers of recycled goods. It offers the benefits of low maintenance, longevity, no water usage and an improved drainage system beneath the surface. It is a package deal of recycled goods. The base is a layer of recycled stone used to create balance. The second level is a composite pad made from recycled rubber and used to achieve a stable surface. The top layer is nontoxic and nonabsorbent sand used to help the turf fibers stand upright. Overall, artificial turf is a great ADA approved, non-flammable and all-weather option with a life of eight to 12 years.

For information, email [coordinator@cmdgreenway.com](mailto:coordinator@cmdgreenway.com).



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# Climbing trees, board games and idea jars: Staying sane when practicing social distancing

*Editor's Note: This is part of a series of light-hearted columns dealing with life in the midst of newly difficult times.*

BY **BYRCE DONOVAN**

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Social distancing.

The term has been getting a bad rap lately. But let's face it: Does it really have to be the worst thing ever to take a little break from people? Look at it this way ... this means no more long drives to the office. Or small talk with strangers. Or pants. (Not to brag, but I was WAY out in front on this one.)

So is it really that bad if, for the next few weeks, we are asked to keep to ourselves and stay close to our homes? I say no. I also say – without the least fear of judgment because we parents understand each other – I am actively looking for an Airbnb for my kids

through mid-September.

In the meantime, of course, we still have our jobs to do. And our children to educate.

**CORRECT:** “That’s right, Suzy, ‘go’ IS the verb in that sentence.”

**INCORRECT:** (Quickly turning off the TV) “Daddy, why was that deer climbing the other deer?”

But in those down times, when you feel a little stir crazy, in order to keep from losing your mind, you have to get a little creative. So we talked to Janis Newton, director of MUSC’s Wellness Center, for some ideas of things we can all do to stay mentally and physically sane during this unprecedented time.

“The rules of the game have changed, and it’s like we’re skating on ice,” Newton says. “So we need to redefine how well-being fits into our isolated worlds. It can be challenging, but if



*Photo by Free To Use Sounds on Unsplash*

## Bored? You can always catch a canceled ball game by yourself.

handled properly, it can also be a time of self-growth.”

So here are a few of those ideas that should help make social distancing a little less painful and, dare I say, a positive experience.

**Share a little virtual love.**

Newton says a simple text, email or

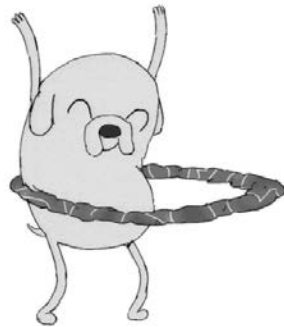
video can make somebody’s day. It can be family, friends, community members, even health care workers. Use social media if you need to. Just make sure it doesn’t feature you sitting atop your hoarded rolls of Charmin.

**Learn a new skill.**

See **DISTANCING** on page 11



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**TESTING** *Continued from Page One*

for testing. Scheurer said because of the high volume, it took longer than doctors and patients would like to get results.

But now that MUSC Health is doing its own testing, Scheurer said the wait time for results is dramatically shorter. “We started measuring our average turnaround time on March 23. From the time we receive the sample to the result showing up in the patient’s medical record so they can find out if they have COVID-19 is 35 hours.”

It’s the latest development as MUSC Health finds innovative ways to handle the pandemic’s impact.

Its Center for Telehealth added COVID-19 to its virtual urgent care options weeks ago, giving everyone across the state free access to COVID-19 screening. So far, almost 20,000 South Carolinians have used it to find out if they might have COVID-19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus that was first detected late last year and has spread around the globe.

Then, MUSC Health opened the state’s first drive-through specimen collection site for people suspected of being infected with the virus. The drive-through site at Citadel Mall is now seeing between 300 and 400 patients a day, six days a week.

MUSC Health also tapped the expertise of MUSC’s pathology and laboratory medicine specialists to get diagnostic instruments normally used for other clinical tests to start testing for COVID-19.

Frederick Nolte, Ph.D., an infectious disease diagnostics expert and a professor in the College of Medicine, said his team was well prepared. “We’ve got the skill level and the resources in the clinical lab needed to do this.”

Steven Carroll, M.D., Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, called the in-house

testing a huge deal. “We didn’t even know the scale of the problem we were dealing with before we were able to do our own testing,” he said.

And that testing continues to expand. Craig Crosson, Ph.D., serves as senior associate dean for research at MUSC. “The entire MUSC enterprise has come to participate. We’re going to take machines from the research side of the equation that are approved and put them to work clinically so that we can really get these tests out in a timely manner that clinicians need and people need and everyone needs,” he said.

Raymond DuBois, M.D., Ph.D., dean of the College of Medicine, said he’s grateful for the team effort and collaboration. “We’re just trying to help get as many tests done as possible. It’s so important to know whether you have been infected by the virus.

“With a positive test result, you will know to stay away from your family members to avoid exposing them and shelter in place at home for at least two weeks. Ample testing is key to being able to make correct decisions about what the best action to take is. Once people who have COVID-19 are isolated, they can’t spread that to others, so that action will help to flatten the curve.”

Scheurer said they’re all preparing for that curve, the rate at which infections climb in South Carolina, to surge in the coming weeks. “We’re probably between three and four weeks out,” she said. “That’s based on some modeling that our public health department has been doing. The modeling gets more precise as time goes on. We’re watching it every day.”

The COVID-19 testing now in its second week at MUSC Health will help health care providers get ready by telling them when to use special supplies and when they’re safe without them. It’s important to protect them from catching the virus so they can keep taking care of people who are seriously ill.

“We know there’s a national shortage



**Carroll**



**Medical technologist Danielle Ribeiro-Nesbitt looks at one of the diagnostic instruments at MUSC that has shifted from its regular work to running COVID-19 tests.**

*Photo by Sarah Pack*

of personal protective equipment. There are rolling outages. The national supply chain is very sporadic,” Scheurer said. “When we get a quick negative test result, it allows us to stop using unnecessary PPEs so we can stockpile them for a surge, whenever that ends up coming. The rapidity of results can make a huge difference in how we’re going to be able to handle the surge.”

On a more immediate level, Scheurer wants to remind people who need to be

tested for COVID-19 that it will cause temporary discomfort. “We do hear some complaints, she said. “But a good test, meaning like a good solid nasal swab, should be uncomfortable because it means they’re getting a good sample. The virus tends to live pretty far back in what we call the pharynx. If it’s a comfortable test where you don’t notice they’re doing it, that may not be a good thing.”

## MUSC shares child care resources during COVID-19 crisis

*Staff Report*

We understand that finding child care can be difficult in this current situation, but there are several opportunities available to the MUSC family that might be helpful. While a variety of options were evaluated, many of them did not allow parents to choose a child care provider or take necessary precautions to limit exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

After careful consideration, we are sharing the following options, which allow care team members to make the appropriate choices for their individual situations and have more control over the care of their children.

1. College of Medicine students are offering child care and other personal services, such as pet sitting, grocery delivery, household assistance and the like, to MUSC care team members on the frontline of health care and public health. This is a student-run project. To learn more or request services, visit [https://docs.](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1fm_OjkGs3j-dr0h15zt47CvhW_72K7xjRPI1HLE-0wY/viewform?edit_requested=true)

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2. Wyndy is a smart phone application available in Charleston. This child care app allows parents to post job opportunities, and babysitters (typically college students) can apply. Wyndy runs background checks on any sitters looking for work. Due to school closures, there are many college students available via this app. MUSC does not endorse Wyndy, more, this is an effort to ensure those who need child care options are aware of it.

3. There are still a number of Department of Social Services-regulated child care centers that are operational statewide. Contact the DSS Child Care Resource and Referral Network at 1-888-335-1002 or visit its website ([www.sc-ccrr.org](http://www.sc-ccrr.org)) to submit a referral indicating your need. A DSS representative will review your request and contact you.

# Focus on well-being during COVID-19

*Note: Tools to promote health, increase resilience and combat anxiety and stress throughout the COVID-19 Outbreak*

In light of the rapidly changing scenario we're facing with the COVID-19 pandemic, stress and anxiety levels amongst our workforce are also likely to be rising as our lives, jobs and normal routines have been disrupted.

As always, the health and well-being of our MUSC care team members are our highest priorities. Furthermore, the MUSC Office of Health Promotion recognizes the importance of sharing critical well-being resources to help our employees and their family members stay healthy, both physically and mentally, as they navigate the weeks and months to come.

In this article, you will find a collection of well-being resources that are available to all MUSC care team members, regardless of whether they are working on the frontlines of the

pandemic or remotely while practicing responsible social distancing.

These resources span a wide variety of areas of well-being, from physical activity that can be practiced on campus or in your home, to mental health resources designed to assist in managing the stress and anxiety that is associated with these unprecedented times.

## Imagine U: MUSC's digital employee well-being program

- Is available to all MUSC care team members.
- Can be accessed 24/7 on any desktop computer, tablet or smartphone.
- Includes over 100 unique well-being challenges organized within four main categories of well-being: Physical Activity, Nutrition & Weight Management, Preventative Care and Psychosocial Health
- The majority of the Imagine U challenges Can, for the most part, be completed remotely and will provide MUSC employees and their families with

valuable health and wellness resources and tools that they can utilize to promote physical and mental well-being as we adapt to the challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak in the weeks ahead.

Visit [www.musc.edu/iu](http://www.musc.edu/iu) and log in with your MUSC credentials to access the Imagine U well-being program on demand on any device with internet capability.

## Physical activity resources on MUSC Main Campus

- Walk the MUSC Medical Mile
- Need a break? Try adding a wellness break into your daily routine. Take a walk around campus following the Medical Mile map. Start anywhere and make a loop back to where you began, and you'll clock 1.17 miles.
- Walk the indoor Wellness Walk. The Wellness Walk PDF total length from beginning to end (from the Dental Clinic building to Rutledge Tower) provides a half mile of climate-controlled walking. A cool one-mile round trip. Start anywhere and end at any point.
- Flight for Fitness. Take the stairs instead – not only will you likely be able to increase social distancing by reducing elevator trips, but you will add short cardio boosts into your daily routine.
- MUSC Fitness Park is a permanent fitness equipment installation located behind the Bioengineering Building and is open for use anytime to the public. It's perfect for those who want to fit in a workout during a break.

\*\*If you do choose to utilize this equipment, please wash hands both before and after at the Urban Farm handwashing station.

## Regional Hospital Network and digitally accessible resources

The MUSC Wellness Center live-stream fitness classes will be posted for all care team members and MUSC Wellness Center members. They also will be saved and posted on the MUSC Wellness Center website and Facebook page and will be accessible 24/7 by all MUSC care team members. Daily workouts will include yoga, functional fitness, stretching/mobility, bodyweight

## MUSC Health & Well-Being

By Susan L. Johnson, Ph.D.,  
MUSC Office of Health  
Promotion



workouts and will be all-levels, accessible for a wide variety of fitness levels. <https://www.facebook.com/muscwellnesscenter/>

## Mental Health and stress reduction resources on MUSC Main Campus

- The Meditation Labyrinth. Care team members are encouraged to utilize the public meditation labyrinth to relax, breath and ground themselves throughout the COVID-19 response. The MUSC Meditation Labyrinth is located on the corner of Bee and President streets, inside the wall.
- Spend time in nature – visit the MUSC Urban Farm from sunrise to sunset. It's at 29 Bee Street. Conduct a self-guided sensory tour through the Urban Farm to get in added steps and reduce stress through "green exercise." Take a walk around campus and check out the 90-acre arboretum. Use the MUSC Arboretum Tree Campus Tree Plotter on your computer or mobile device to learn about each tree on campus.

## Regional Hospital Network and digitally accessible resources

- The Tese Stephens, R.N., Ph.D., P.R.E.P podcast is available on anchor and Spotify (Spotify link is on anchor page) <https://anchor.fm/RNPrep>
- Free licensing of Headspace meditation app for U.S. health care workers in public health settings throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Headspace has curated specific guided meditations titled "Weathering the Storm" designed for the health care workforce currently facing immense pressure amid the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Additional free meditation digital apps: Calm, Stop, Breathe & Think and Insight Timer
- Connect remotely with a licensed therapist:

Talkspace: <https://www.talkspace.com/>

See **RESOURCES** on page 11

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**DISTANCING** *Continued from Page Eight*

Wish you were a gourmet cook? An expert on Mongolian dynasties? Always wanted to speak Spanish but never had the time? Well guess what? Now you do have the time and the opportunity to get super frustrated with a whole new skill! Not to mention potentially learning new ways to swear at your family.

**❑ Create new ways to get exercise.**

In this new germ-infested world, the gym probably isn't the best place to get your daily fitness routine in. But that doesn't mean you should just sit on the couch and watch six consecutive seasons of "Game of Thrones," which I totally didn't do yesterday. But if you insist on watching lots of TV, Newton says you should make a game out of it. Get a deck of cards and every commercial you draw a card that is correlated to a movement. Six of diamonds? Do six push-ups and six jumping jacks. Queen of spades? Do a

dozen deep lunges.

**PRO TIP:** Keep an UNO deck handy, and when you get tired, sneak out a "reverse" and make somebody else do the exercise for you.

Also, spread the exercise out. "If you're used to an hour workout," Newton says, "break it up into seven-minute chunks."

**❑ Get outside and think like a kid.**

If you're craving a little Vitamin D, go out in your backyard and get back to being a kid. Climb a tree. Jump a fence. Crawl under a table. Eat dirt. Complain about something really trivial. Say you're bored. Fourteen times in a row. OK, maybe that's going too far, but you get the idea.

**❑ Laugh.**

This one's really important. "Make sure it's part of every day," Newton says. This can be done by watching funny movies, reading satirical articles or simply talking with loved ones about that time when people used to

congregate in groups of more than 10.

**❑ Start an idea jar.**

If you have what feels like a houseful, come up with a list of things that need to be done as well as things you want to do. Write everything down on pieces of paper, fold them up and put them in a jar. Take turns drawing them out and make a game out of it.

Newton stresses that in order for this to work, you need to take input from everybody.

"Look, we're all in this together," she says. "So take it down to the family level. Kids need to feel they have self-growth and a voice during this, too."

ME (pulls out a piece of paper from the jar): "Sweet! We got 'Sort the laundry!'"

MY KIDS: "This is stupid."

ME: "Oh, I'm sorry. Let's see what sort of ideas you geniuses came up with." (Pulls out another piece of paper.) "Hire a maid." (Pause.) "OK, your idea is better."

**❑ Play old games.**

Everybody owns checkers or Jenga. Or that one game where it's during an operation on a patient who's lying on a table they do operations on ... I forget what it's called - Organ Grab? The point is, don't forget about those classic board games. There's no need to make every activity feel like it was planned by Martha Stewart or plucked from Pinterest. Sometimes the answer to your boredom is right there under the lamp in my living room. Er, I mean, in your game cabinet.

**❑ Go through old pictures.**

Have you ever stumbled upon old pictures, started looking through them and next thing you knew, it was two hours later? I think we can all agree that a treasure trove of pics of your dad

with four-inch chest hair and your mom with a hairstyle that would have served as fine protection against a rockslide is pure gold. And if you have kids, going through old photos can allow you to enlighten them about some of their familial history, providing them with a solid connection to you. Not to mention give them an opportunity to laugh at you and your past hairdos, too.

MY SON: "Before you had my sister and me, you looked weird."

ME: "What do you mean?"

MY SON: "Well for starters, you're smiling."

**❑ Get more sleep.**

This one is obvious and - much like when your mom told you to put your coat on before going outside in the winter - nobody wants to hear it. Yes, sleep is important. We get it. But when you're a grown up with responsibilities, sometimes it can be difficult to turn in by 10:45 p.m., when for the first time that day, you're finally able to focus on your own needs.

That's why you need to come up with workarounds, Newton says. "Create a new habit before bed that will make bedtime more enjoyable," she says. "For instance, you can start a new tradition where everybody says something they are grateful for, turning sleep into something you're looking forward to."

So folks, don't despair. This too shall pass. We will be back to normal again in no time. But until then, keep things fresh at home by utilizing some of these handy tips. You never know, they might just be things you continue to do even after the pandemic ends.

Just make sure you finally brush your teeth when that happens.

**RESOURCES** *Continued from Page Ten*

Better Help: <https://www.betterhelp.com/>

Connect with a licensed therapist via text messages, audio messages, picture and video messages and text-based chat rooms.

**❑ Nutrition resources on MUSC Main Campus**

- Free produce pick-up for care team members at the MUSC Urban Farm. Pickup dates/times are Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 1:00 until 3:30 p.m. Produce, flowers and house/desk plants are available to anyone with an MUSC badge on a first-come, first-serve basis while supplies last each day.
- Free shelf stable food available for MUSC care team members' children only. An MUSC badge is required - child/children do not have to be present. The pickup dates/time are Tuesdays from 6:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m. and Thursdays from 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. The drive-through pickup is at MUSC Wellness Center at 45 Courtenay Drive Charleston, SC 29401.

**❑ Regional Hospital Network and digitally accessible resources**

- The MUSC Wellness Center "Ask a Dietitian" program features

registered dietitian Judith Herrin answering nutrition questions from care team members remotely via email at [jmherrin@bellsouth.net](mailto:jmherrin@bellsouth.net). Use your MUSC email to have your nutrition question answered.

- External nutrition support resources include area resources to feed children at <https://www.lowcountryfoodbank.org/covid-19-response/> and food assistance for the whole family at <https://www.lowcountryfoodbank.org/findhelp>.

- Did you know that you may now qualify for SNAP, a federal nutrition program that helps you stretch your food budget and buy healthy food? Anyone who is eligible will receive benefits. It's also important to know that you will not be taking away benefits from someone else if you apply.

- You may qualify for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), a time-limited program that assists families with children when the parents or other responsible relatives cannot provide for the family's basic needs.

- Learn more about SNAP and TANF, or to apply, visit <https://scnapp.sc.gov/> or call 800-616-1309.

For more information on resources about Imagine U, email [musc-empwell@musc.edu](mailto:musc-empwell@musc.edu).

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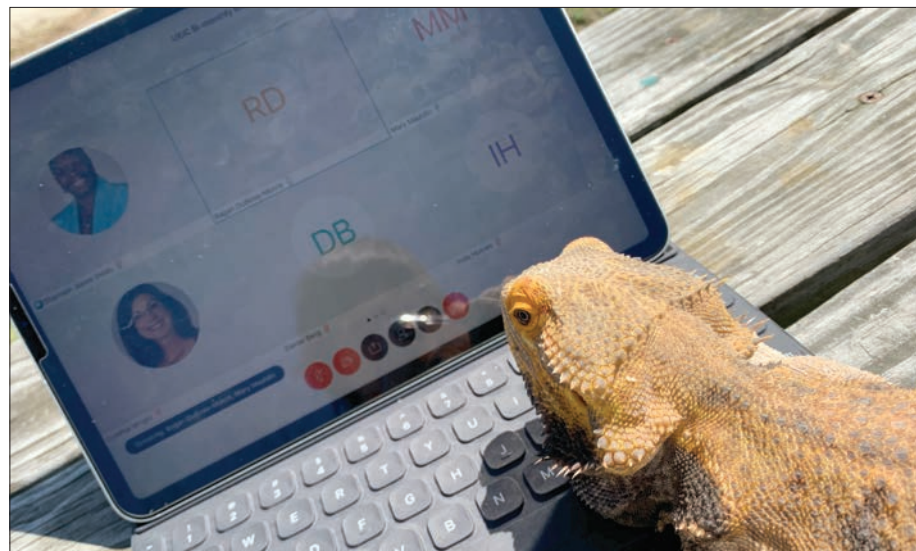
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# Sometimes you need to stop! — Yammer Time! and smell the roses

By **BYRCE DONOVAN**  
donovanb@musc.edu

As many of us have already discovered in this new COVID-19 era, working remotely can be a challenge. There are the distractions (kids, pets, TV), the new responsibilities that come with being separated from colleagues (multiple conference calls a day, texts at 7 p.m.) and, of course, the frustrations stemming from all of the above (online meetings glitching, VPN not working, kids insisting on being fed). Staying positive isn't always easy. That's why Lisa Montgomery, executive vice president for Finance and Operations at MUSC, decided to bring a small ray of light to her employees in Finance and Administration. By creating a Yammer group for those people, Montgomery hopes that through daily posts on the intranet social media platform, she can

keep her employees upbeat, connected and, most importantly, feeling less isolated as they work remotely and/or in much less populated work environments. "It's about maintaining good communication, even when we're all over the place," Montgomery said. "We've got team members working on campus — public safety, mail services, facilities, just to name a few — as well as spread out all over Charleston, so we want to help make them feel less isolated, safe and in good health." Montgomery charged a group of talented and creative minds, led by Paula Sutton, manager of learning development and technologies in the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to head up the initiative, cleverly named "Yammer Time." According to Sutton, the topics range from health and wellness to tips on the best ways to work remotely. "Though we've only been doing this for



**Working from home, Engineering and Facilities' Jennifer Hoel takes a break, along with her pet iguana, to check messages posted to a Finance and Administration Yammer group.**

about a week, the response has been overwhelmingly positive," explained Sutton. "In fact, one of the first things we did was say to people, 'Show us your home work space.' And the photos we got? They were priceless." Sutton expects that Yammer Time will only continue to gain in popularity as more and more

people get involved. This week, they are soliciting suggestions for the best go-to snack ideas. "With our new office being our homes, the possibilities for topics are endless," she said. "And by doing this, it just provides us with a simple way to catch up with one another, share a laugh and stay connected."

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