

System Offices Town Hall Q&A, December 14, 2020

Questions asked by System Offices employees participating on the December 14, 2020 Town Hall that could not be answered during the event.

Answers provided by:

- Dr. Katherine Banks, Vice Chancellor of Engineering and National Laboratories, The Texas A&M University System, Dean of Engineering, Texas A&M University, Director, Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station
- Greg Hartman, Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives, The Texas A&M University System, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Texas A&M Health
- Henry Judah, Director, Risk Management, System Offices

There is autonomous research in the DFW area, do you partner with others?

We collaborate with other universities and industry around the country. But currently, neither the Bush Combat Development Complex nor the Texas A&M Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) are collaborating with the autonomy track (driverless shuttle) at DFW International Airport. And more broadly, TTI knows of no other A&M System entities collaborating with the DFW International Airport autonomous activities.

Do you predict all the states will handle vaccinations similarly, or will we potentially continue to have issues with travel/ arguing between states?

At this time, it's my understanding that each state is being asked to develop their approach to vaccine distribution. So while the federal government is providing some guidance, my guess is that there will be variations from state to state.

Are there coronavirus mutations and is that a concern?

I'm not a clinician or researcher, but I do know that it is not uncommon for viruses to "mutate". That does not necessarily mean that it becomes uncontrollable. It is possible that a mutation could occur which would make the virus more dangerous to humans and more difficult to control through our developing vaccines. However, it's my understanding that this has not occurred with COVID-19 at this time.

Will the people that have not had COVID be given the vaccine before the ones that have had COVID?

It is safe and probably a good idea for even those who have had COVID-19 to receive the vaccine. It is not known for sure how long the immunity to the virus lasts after being infected.

Some people at the CDC have suggested that people who have had COVID-19 should have to wait longer to get the vaccine, but I am not aware of a specific policy being adopted on that matter, either by the CDC or here in the State of Texas.

Can we be assured that once we receive the first dose, the second dose will be readily available?

The distribution plans being developed and put into place by the state are being built upon the assumption and necessity for people to receive both doses of these first vaccines. In other words, when you get a first dose, there is a second dose reserved in the inventory for you to receive.

What is the current plan for return to the office?

We will continue to operate in our current stance for the immediate future.

Is there any news about the negotiations to keep CHI St Joseph in our BCBS network as preferred providers?

Adam Davidson sent an email to System Offices employees on December 14 and December 17 with information on the negotiation.