

March 10, 2020

**Dear nPOD, HIRN/HPAP, HANDEL-P/I, HubMAP Investigators, and Laboratory Personnel,**

We hope this email finds each of you well.

As you are aware, much in the way of attention, be it by media or public health systems, has been directed at the COVID-19 virus (Coronavirus) and its impact on global health.

In our role as procurers and providers of tissues for a variety of research programs, we are taking this threat very seriously. Here, we want to share important information regarding the precautionary measures we are implementing.

First, we are in close contact with our Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) partners and we will follow their and other guidelines put forward by professional organizations in this area. For example, per the Eye Bank Association of America, American Association of Tissue Banks, and CDC/FDA, a series of screening questions are being asked of all organ donor families regarding an organ donor. We will ensure that these questions are addressed for every organ donor referral that comes to us and we will not accept any tissues from a referral that has not been appropriately screened. Moving forward, we will adhere to any new and additional guidelines that may be implemented by OPOs or the aforementioned organizations.

Further, we will be working with our OPO partners as instructed to assure that viral screening methods, alongside laboratory values and donor history, will be used as a means to protect both our laboratory staff and research community from infection.

With respect to program specific changes, we are also implementing additional precautionary measures:

**nPOD:**

- Effective immediately, nPOD will only accept donors with T1D or non-diabetic individuals with T1D-associated autoantibodies, based on current acceptance criteria, providing they have passed all screening procedures implemented by the above indicated organizations. The tissues will be processed according to standard nPOD SOPs.
- At this time, nPOD will not conduct pancreatic islet isolation or generate pancreas slices.
- Frozen or fixed tissue/sample distributions to investigators will continue for donors that have been recovered before January 19, 2020, the date in which the first patient was identified in the United States. Samples from donors identified beyond this date will become available for distribution after testing negative for COVID-19.

### **HIRN/HPAP:**

- Effective immediately, nPOD will only refer donors to HPAP program with T1D or non-diabetic with T1D-associated autoantibodies, based on current acceptance criteria, providing they have passed the all screening procedures implemented by the aforementioned organizations.
- HPAP leadership has, and will continue to work with its investigators, to assure that all appropriate safety procedures are followed and will continue to monitor the emerging situation.

### **HANDEL-P and HANDEL-I Programs:**

- Given the specialized nature of these tissues, the leadership of the HANDEL programs have decided to immediately suspend current procurement efforts. This suspension will continually be monitored and procurement reinstated at an appropriate time.

### **HubMAP:**

- Similar to the HANDEL programs, current procurement efforts have immediately been suspended. This suspension will continually be monitored and procurement reinstated at an appropriate time.

In sum, protecting our staff, research partners, as well as their staff is of the highest priority to us. We, along with our OPO partners, will be sure to stay on the cutting edge when it comes to the advancements in screening for COVID-19. In this time of uncertainty, we also encourage you and your staff to review your own institutional and biosafety recommendations on personal protective equipment while working with human tissues.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. We thank you for your appreciation and attention to these matters.

Best regards,

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