

Tulane to host forum about emerging 2019 coronavirus outbreak

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Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine will host a forum on Friday about what infectious disease experts know about the emerging 2019 novel coronavirus, how local health officials are responding and how the global public health community is working to stop the epidemic.

The [free event](#) will be held at noon, Feb. 14th, in the Diboll Auditorium at 1440 Canal St.

The forum includes virologist [Preston Marx](#), PhD; infectious disease physician [Dr. David Mushatt](#); disease ecologist [Lina Moses](#), PhD; epidemiologist [Michael Levy](#), PhD, of the University of Pennsylvania; Tulane business continuity manager [Meredith Beers](#) and Anna Gunod, director of infection prevention at Tulane Medical Center. [Dr. Ronald Blanton](#), chair of the Department of Tropical Medicine, will moderate the event.

The 2019 coronavirus originated in Wuhan, China. There have been more than 42,000 confirmed cases and more than 1,000 deaths from the virus in China so far. There have been 393 cases in a total of 24 countries.

There are many unknowns about the virus as researchers rush to find out how it spreads, how contagious it is and ways it may respond to current treatments. Blanton hopes the panel is an easy way for people to learn the latest information about the virus and how the research and public health communities are responding.

“The aim is to fill in information that may not have been covered in one place and to supplement what has already been released by the university and others,” Blanton said.

The School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine has launched a website [here](#) for the latest information about the coronavirus and Tulane’s involvement in fighting the outbreak.

The World Health Organization announced Tuesday that it would be calling the new disease COVID-19. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in many different species of animals, including cattle, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS, SARS and now COVID-19.

While the immediate risk of this new virus to the American public is believed to be low at this time, the CDC has issued an advisory to avoid all nonessential travel to China. Those arriving from the country to the U.S. must undergo health screenings and may be under a 14-day quarantine to avoid any possible transmission.