

From: [Office of Roberta Schwartz](#)
Subject: Hurricane Laura update
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The Houston region remains firmly within Hurricane Laura's cone less than two days before it makes landfall. Unlike Hurricane Harvey, which stalled over Houston and produced historical flooding, Hurricane Laura's fast speed means the storm will move quickly north once it makes landfall sometime Wednesday evening. The storm is expected to clear out by Thursday morning, but its possible strong winds might cause severe residential damage and blackouts. To be prepared, we have opened an incident command for this event and are activating our ride out protocols. This way, we are ready for the worst-case scenario. We are canceling all scheduled cases, ancillary appointments and closing the medical office buildings Thursday, but expecting to reopen Friday.

Dealing with a major storm while also treating more than 300 COVID-19 patients will create some truly unique challenges. But we have a long history of dealing with these type of crises. Our past experiences have made us resilient and prepared us to deal with the worst. I'm confident that regardless of what happens, we will overcome any issues this storm may create for us.

Ride Out Teams

If you're scheduled to work tomorrow night, Wednesday Aug. 26, or on Thursday morning, you will be asked to come in early for the night shift and stay over the night before the Thursday shift. You'll be informed by your hospital, but you might be asked to sleep at your hospital for your safety and the safety of our patients. Each hospital is arranging safe sleeping arrangements for all staff taking into account social distancing practices. Bring your own bedding as linens will not be provided. Please bring a bag with a change of clothes including your mask and face shield if you have one. Ride out team members in the past generously brought meals for others to share, but because of COVID-19 safety concerns, we're asking everyone to bring their own food. If you do bring food for other team members, you must individually wrap every portion. Refrigerator capacity may be limited over the course of several days so please plan your meals accordingly.

For nonexempt employees who have been requested to come in early or sleep, you will be paid for those hours even when you are sleeping. If you are not needed for work on Thursday, you are expected to take a PTO day or choose to be unpaid for the day. Please see HR 94 at [this link](#) for more information on pay and other HR issues pertaining to weather events.

Child and Pet Care

Due to COVID-19 safety issues, there will be no child or pet care for ride out team members or other employees. If you are scheduled to work Wednesday or Thursday and you anticipate child care or pet issues, you should make the appropriate arrangements or talk to your manager about switching shifts. If you cannot come to work during this time, you will be asked to take PTO or choose to be unpaid for the day.

Thursday schedules

As mentioned earlier, scheduled cases and ancillary services are being canceled Thursday in anticipation of Hurricane Laura. All medical office buildings will be closed, too. PO physicians are transitioning regular visits to virtual visits and patients are being contacted with instructions. There will be no collections for COVID-19 testing for employees or patients on Thursday.

Command Center phone numbers

If you need to contact your hospital's command center, please use these numbers:

HMH: 713.441.2968

Willowbrook: 281.737.0099

Clear Lake: 281.523.2042

Sugar Land: 281.274.7865

The Woodlands: 936.270.2624

We will continue to monitor this weather situation and communicate with you as necessary. [Space City Weather](#) is a good resource for weather information. [Click here to check up-to-date information on roadway closures in Houston](#). Make sure [public transportation is operating as usual](#) if you use it to get to work or home.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our patients.

Roberta Schwartz

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