

The deadly COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest public crisis the United States has ever faced. The Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy has marshalled its outstanding network of experts to respond to the crisis in real time, guiding Federal and state leaders through this extraordinarily difficult period. Interdisciplinary faculty and researchers from Duke University, Duke Health System and other leading health organizations are collaborating on vital, evidence-based strategies needed now to address the pandemic.

Duke-Margolis has put forward key policy steps leaders must take to respond comprehensively to the COVID-19 pandemic, to reopen the nation successfully, and create a more secure health care system. At the same time, the Center continues its vital mission to educate tomorrow's health policy leaders, develop and analyze new data, provide timely thought leadership, and engage the greater public through outreach and education.



*Duke-Margolis is helping policymakers design effective interventions that will save lives and protect the economy. This is truly the Center's moment."*

—Vincent Price, PhD  
President, Duke University

## ENSURING BETTER, SAFER HEALTH CARE DURING COVID-19 AND BEYOND

Since the early days of the US response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Center has contributed research and policy leadership across a number of key national response efforts:

### Reopening Safely

As lockdowns and shelter-in-place policies took effect nationwide, Center researchers and collaborators mobilized quickly to put forward recommendations on how to conduct large-scale national testing for COVID-19, contain spread of the virus, and phase in a gradual return to normal life. This includes:

- A March 26 [report](#) outlining how the FDA, test manufacturers, and other parts of the health care system could develop, deploy, and improve a range of diagnostic tests capable of reaching all Americans
- A cornerstone March 29 [set of recommendations](#) establishing targets that states and regions would need to meet in order to achieve different phases of reopening and prepare for future waves of the pandemic
- April 7 and May 1 reports mapping out the specifics of a national COVID-19 [surveillance strategy](#) designed to ensure a swift, effective response to contain the current pandemic and the [data infrastructure](#) needed to make that goal a reality
- *USA Today* [op-ed](#) urging states to approach reopening in a safe, evidence-based manner

### Developing Treatments and Vaccines

In parallel, the Center has led multi-stakeholder efforts aimed at finding treatments and, ultimately, vaccines for COVID-19. These activities have included a number of

projects and recommendations to improve the efficiency of clinical trials, prepare manufacturing facilities for making FDA-approved treatments, and ensure that physicians and health systems can provide access to treatments as they are available. The Center published a March 19 [call to action](#) recommending formation of FDA-led task forces as well as a [major set of recommendations](#) for improving COVID-19 drug development on May 20.

Duke-Margolis-affiliated faculty are also leading a [groundbreaking study](#) engaging health care workers across the nation to research the impact of COVID-19 on their own health and evaluate potential treatments to prevent

### Strengthening Health Care, Now and for the Future

As providers on the front lines continue their fight to save patients from COVID-19, practices across the country also have faced severe financial strain as non-COVID-related care is deferred until after physical distancing measures are lifted and the current pandemic subsides. In response to the pandemic, the health care system has shown positive shifts toward telehealth and home- and community-based services. Together with better public health integration, these efforts not only further contain the spread of the virus but lay the foundation for a more convenient, less costly, prevention-oriented health care system that better addresses patient needs and health disparities in the future. On June 10, the Center issued a [summary](#) and [issue brief](#) detailing the need for federal support for health care providers both to help enhance their ability to contain COVID-19 and create a more resilient health care system as the nation emerges from the pandemic. It also issued [near-term steps](#) that Medicare and Medicaid could take to support better COVID-19 testing.

## PARTNERING WITH NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina moved quickly to implement the physical distancing measures that helped to contain initial spread, and now Duke-Margolis is [working with experts](#) from across the state are to monitor the current transmission of COVID-19, phase in reopening, and chart a path forward.

This work includes collaborative efforts with Center-affiliated faculty to [survey citizens](#) about their views on social and physical distancing as well as briefings for the press and policymakers on North Carolina's surge capacity and response planning.

## COLLABORATING WITH EXPERTS AROUND THE WORLD

In partnership with global health organizations and researchers at Duke University, the Center is engaged on a number of fronts related to overcoming COVID-19 internationally. This includes projects led by Center researchers and Center-affiliated faculty to explore health

system improvements in **low-and middle-income countries**, develop the treatments and **vaccines needed** around the world, and support global availability and distribution of those treatments.

## EDUCATING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Overcoming future pandemics will require today's Duke students and researchers studying health and health policy to receive training in interdisciplinary methods for tackling the numerous unknowns and to have access to cutting-edge policy research and analysis. As the University assesses what education during COVID-19 will look like in the next academic year, the Center is already actively bringing issues related to the pandemic into the classroom:

- **Margolis Seminars** convene more than 100 faculty, researchers, and students in weekly open discussions that inform actions and next steps to address COVID-19
- **Margolis Scholars and Post-Doctoral Students** directly apply academic scholarship in real time to advance

Duke-Margolis recommendations and guidance on COVID-19

- **Duke Undergraduates and 2020 Summer Interns** actively extend the vital work of Duke-Margolis by working closely with faculty and research mentors on timely projects to inform the overall impact of the Center's COVID-related work
- **Course Development** is leading to new online learning modules that examine recent and proposed reforms in health care practices and policies to improve the value of health care in the time of COVID-19
- **Bass Connections**, in partnership with Duke-Margolis, launched a special call for proposals for student-faculty teams to address research questions

## ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC

Throughout this pandemic, Duke-Margolis has worked at every step to engage leaders and the broader public in crucial conversations that improve our shared response to COVID-19. Center researchers and experts brief Federal and state governmental agencies, provide recommendations and technical assistance to the U.S.

Congress, and work closely with leading experts in a variety of fields to advance solutions. The Center has also dedicated significant time to hosting public, virtual roundtables to inform the public on progress related to **diagnostic testing**, **treatment** and **vaccine development**, and **health care reforms**.



*Social distancing bends the curve and relieves some pressure on our heroic medical professionals. But in order to shift off current policies, the key will be a robust system of testing and monitoring – something we have yet to put in place nationwide.”*

—President Barak Obama  
via **Twitter** citing Duke-Margolis research

## SUPPORT THE DUKE-MARGOLIS RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Philanthropy from individuals, foundations, and corporations is critical to our ability to educate tomorrow's health policy leaders and provide timely, evidence-based health policy solutions that affect how health care is delivered, financed, and regulated—in times of crisis and beyond. Gifts in the following areas are meaningful investments in our work focused on the pandemic response:

- **Policy**—support for applied research, policy analysis, and technical assistance to inform and guide policy reforms, on both specific timely specific topics and overall COVID-19 response strategies
- **Students**—support for classes, teaching, internships related to our work on COVID-19
- **Outreach**—support for disseminating timely policy updates and informing the public related to COVID-19

Duke-Margolis is grateful for contributions that uphold the Center's core mission, including: **financial support for students at every level** from undergraduates to Scholars and post-doctoral; **faculty support**, including fellowships and professorships that recruit and retain health policy experts at Duke; funding for **innovative research and policy analysis** to improve health and the value of health care; support for meetings and symposia that **convene eminent and diverse leaders** to interpret evidence and develop reform proposals; and **unrestricted support** which allows the Center to be nimble in addressing timely challenges like COVID-19.

For more information about Duke-Margolis work on COVID, contact Morgan Romine, [morgan.romine@duke.edu](mailto:morgan.romine@duke.edu).  
To support the Duke-Margolis response to COVID, contact Shannon Reavis, [shannon.reavis@duke.edu](mailto:shannon.reavis@duke.edu)