

From: Dave Franz [davidrf Franz@gmail.com]
Sent: 4/14/2020 10:16:51 AM
To: LeDuc, James W. [jwleduc@UTMB.EDU]
Subject: Re: Suggestions

WARNING: This email originated from outside of UTMB's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I missed this yesterday, Jim. Good note...and timely on your part. I haven't worried much about the BSL-4 lab, but certainly the one downtown. I just hate for our friends to have to deal with all this, as you note...particularly in their world.

On Apr 13, 2020, at 3:47 PM, LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU> wrote:

Please do not forward---below and attached is the message I sent to Zhiming early in the outbreak as questions began to surface about the origin of the new virus. Unfortunately, I never received a response. As we explore trying to reengage our dialogue, some of these questions might be discussed.

Jim

From: LeDuc, James W.
Sent: Sunday, February 09, 2020 4:15 PM
To: Yuan Zhiming <yzm@wh.iov.cn>
Cc: Shi, Pei yong <peshi@UTMB.EDU>
Subject: Suggestions

Dear Zhiming,

I am devastated to see the evolving nCoV epidemic unfolding in Wuhan and I just hope that you, your family and the larger Institute colleagues are well and surviving this very difficult time.

I want to suggest that you conduct a thorough review of the laboratory activities associated with research on coronaviruses so that you are fully prepared to answer questions dealing with the origin of the virus. I'm sure that you have considered this already, but attached are some areas where you may wish to investigate and be prepared to address. You might even consider preparing a manuscript that addresses these topics in an effort to be transparent and proactive. I would be pleased to work with you on such a paper if you think that would be helpful.

I raise these issues since I am receiving questions along these lines more and more frequently. Initially they came from social media and other "alternate information sources" but in the last few days I have been approached by senior officials and major reputable newspapers. Most link the opening of the new BSL4 lab as a possible source of the virus. Clearly addressing this will be essential, with any kind of documentation you might have available used to back up your comments. (It's not clear to me where the coronavirus work was/is actually being conducted.)

I have the utmost respect and admiration for Dr Shi and I am in no way casting doubt on her or her colleagues. I just think that we need to aggressively address these rumors and presumably false accusations quickly and provide definitive, honest information to counter misinformation. If there are weaknesses in your program, now is the time to admit them and get them corrected.

I trust that you will take my suggestions in the spirit of one friend trying to help another during a very difficult time.