

STANDARD DEVIATIONS: Take the Pledge

Greetings,

Remember the Alamo? San Antonio, Texas, has made biosafety a principle of its reopening strategy. That effort is an important step in recognizing pathogen awareness as a new dynamic in our lives.

Many businesses in the San Antonio area are pledging a unified effort to protect health and safety in the community. Businesses that receive funding from San Antonio city (Bexar County, TX) are required to make efforts to reduce the risks of community spread and implement safe practices that reduce risk. Employers post this pledge in storefronts to alert customers to their participation:



{ <https://www.visitsanantonio.com/greatersafertogether/> }

Here is a great example of using biosafety controls to mitigate risk outside the lab.



In the laboratory, we've been using these practices for decades to keep staff safe. The pandemic of COVID-19 has been a wake-up call to the rest of the world that preventive measures are effective.

Our standards and practices are fundamental to safe laboratory work. The pledge in San Antonio models the strategies of biosafety.

Look at the similarities:

- Using administrative controls such as following CDC protocol and training
- Using engineering controls such as distancing, temperature checks, and hand hygiene
- And, PPE use with face coverings (of course, restaurants have been advocating gloves and hair nets for a while).

These are practices we use in the lab all the time (nowadays) and we know they are effective measures. The translation of these principles to the world outside the lab bench is long overdue.

The advent of risk awareness in the general population may prove a game-changer in our society. Will we witness declines in influenza and other diseases that are easily transmissible? Will this awareness translate to other pathogens, and will it last?

We know it works in the lab. It's about time the rest of the world got on board. As laboratory workers, we make this pledge every time we put on that lab coat. We make a pledge to ourselves, our coworkers, and our families, to be safe and to keep others safe.

The important thing is to keep these practices alive and relevant in our work in the laboratory. Now is the time for our standard lab practices to become the model for safety in the routine world.

Have a great week and be safe,

Bryan

