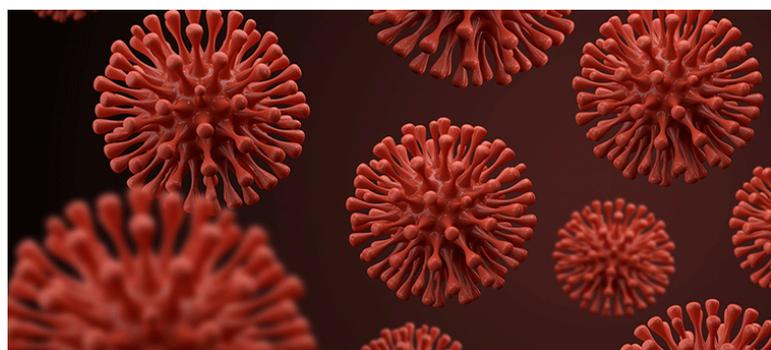




New Grant Targets Global Health Protection Against the Spread of Infectious Diseases

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation Global Public Health Institute at the University of Miami has awarded José Szapocznik, Ph.D., chair emeritus of the Miller School of Medicine's Department of Public Health Sciences, a grant to develop a project to promote global health protection against the spread of infectious diseases.

"We are analyzing how countries collaborate when infectious disease outbreaks occur," said Dr. Szapocznik, who is also professor of public health sciences, architecture, psychology, and educational and psychological studies at UM. "Both infectious diseases that are transmitted human to human or animal to human, and what kind of political, fiscal and technical resolve and capabilities would be needed to contain early the spread of novel pathogens within and across countries. That would be using a model that is informed not only by prior outbreaks of AIDS, Ebola, Zika, MERS and SARS, but also the novel coronavirus or COVID-19.



"The hope is that this project can mobilize the whole world around an outbreak in a coordinated fashion. We must continue to strive to have all countries work together

in a concerted effort to stop epidemics."



A global agreement or convention, for example, would identify what the responsibility of affected countries and the global community is to ensure quick containment and eradication of an outbreak. For new multilateral agreements or mechanisms to be effective, it would be important to understand what the facilitators and obstacles have been to implementation of existing international conventions and bilateral agreements that address global public health security.

“In a unique collaboration with the Department of Public Health Sciences, we will engage in global public health policy analysis and research to identify principles to improve adherence to existing multilateral agreements,” said Jorge Saavedra M.D., M.P.H., M.H.P.M, executive director of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation Global Public Health Institute at UM. “We aim to greatly improve infectious disease pandemic preparedness and rapid response to ensure containment of novel pathogens, with the goal of stopping the spread of novel pathogens early.”

Dr. Szapocznik and Dr. Saavedra propose to develop a set of principles on global public health protection based on the input of global stakeholders and informed by existing international accords and regulations, as well as barriers and facilitators to their implementation.

They will create a framework where advocates can initiate discussions in their respective countries about the nature of a convention that could be adopted by all countries. They would also make suggestions for a governance model and principles for response, and identify incentives that may be sufficiently attractive to encourage countries, academic entities and other non-governmental entities to adhere to, as



well as explore the right balance between sovereignty and global public health.

Eventually, they will create a report that will be presented at the UNITE conference in Portugal in September 2020. UNITE is a global parliamentarians' network to end infectious diseases, composed of people who were or are currently parliamentarians in their countries. Based on UNITE's input, the document will be further modified to ensure that it represents the views of UNITE's members.

"If they are willing to adopt this, then they will hopefully advocate within their countries for this more effective multilateral agreement or mechanisms," said Dr. Szapocznik.