



April 10, 2020

Dear Fellow Employee,

I have had the opportunity to see a number of you recently and although you are wearing a mask, your eyes tell me how difficult this is on you. Please know that is very well understood by the organization Leadership team and we will continue to do all we can to make sure you and your patients/residents are safe. We are also looking at ways to support you better in this very difficult and challenging time.

Please note the following updates:

1. As more information becomes known, we are adjusting our approach to testing and use of PPE. I apologize if these updates confuse you. Any questions or concerns should be immediately shared with your manager or sent to my attention through anarrow@oneidahealthcare.org.
2. With the above in mind, effective immediately, we will be testing all patients admitted or placed on observation status. This change was instituted due to the fact that asymptomatic patients become symptomatic days later and we would prefer to know that right up front rather than at that time pursue testing. Although it still will take up to 48 hours to receive test results, we think this makes sense to pursue. The new Rapid Testing process, once approved for use here, will help us to know right about the COVID status of all patients. What this policy change means is that all admissions/observation patients will be considered COVID-19 pending, requiring the full use of PPE until the results are known. We will continue to place symptomatic patients who may be COVID-19 positive on the isolation unit. Those who are asymptomatic and being tested just in case will be admitted to the non-isolation wing. In the event of a surge of inpatients, we will adjust placement according to bed and staff capacity/capabilities.
3. With item 2 above in mind, the ECF will be testing all admissions coming from other hospitals. These new admissions will be placed on the newly developed isolation wing at the ECF until such time that we are ok with releasing them into another room in the facility off of isolation.
4. It appears I created confusion with my update yesterday on who should be wearing face shields over their face masks. The intent was for staff persons who are providing direct patient care to always wear those face shields. If you are delivering food to a unit or walking down the hall, the likelihood of you benefitting from the face shield protection is minimal. If you are in close contact with patients/residents (i.e. within 6 feet), then a face shield is recommended. Otherwise the proper wearing of a surgical mask will suffice.
5. At the current time, we have 2 positive COVID-19 patients in the hospital and 5 inpatients pending. We have tested 442 patients, 46 of which are positive, 362 negative and 34 pending. We have 5 pending tests out from 4/8 and 29 pending from 4/9.

6. Good news on the finance side. We did receive monies today from the Federal Government stimulus package, the CARES Act. Unlike other funds we requested, this amount will not have to be repaid. This is a good thing and will help us to pay our ongoing organizational expenses. The hope is that the remainder of the \$100 billion will be issued soon. To date, \$30 billion has been distributed nationally.
7. As a reminder, all employees are to be monitoring their symptoms and documenting twice a day on the Symptom Monitoring Tracking Form. Once the form is filled, please turn it in to your manager as we may be asked to show proof when all is said and done that we were complying with Federal requirements.
8. We have set up a donation page on our Oneida Health website. As a result, we have received a number of donations including food and items requested for our "Zen" rooms. You will be seeing these donations soon in many of our areas. We are sending thank you notes to our very thoughtful donors.
9. The Employee COVID-19 Resource Web Page is up and running. The link is in the email that Andrea has sent with today's update. You are encouraged to check it out while at work or when at home. We will continue to add to it with the goal of providing ongoing support and resources to our staff.

Please accept my deepest appreciation and gratitude. You are going above and beyond to protect each other and to protect and care for our patients and residents.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale
President and CEO