



April 13, 2021

Dear Fellow Employees,

There has been some updates that I would like to share with all members of our organization regarding the pandemic.

Please note the following:

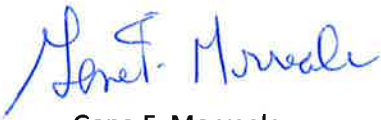
1. Johnson & Johnson Vaccine- We received notification from the NYS Health Commissioner that they are recommending a pause on the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Although adverse events related to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine appear to be rare, people who have received the vaccine have developed severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath and should contact their primary care physician for evaluation. For your information, we have not administered the J & J vaccine here at Oneida Health. We have been supplying the Moderna vaccine for most of our vaccinations. Some of the Pfizer vaccine was used in the nursing home.
2. COVID Positive Update- We continue to see an uptick in the number of COVID positive individuals. We currently have 7 COVID positive inpatients. We performed 133 rapid tests yesterday and 8 were positive. Please keep this fact in mind in regards to ensuring that you do all you can to protect yourself, our patients and residents as well as your loved ones.
3. Visiting Hours- We are updating the Visitor Response Plan to allow visitation in the hospital 7 days per week from 10am-12pm and once again from 4-6pm. Two visitors are allowed per patient during each time sequence for a total of up to 4 visitors per day. This change was made based upon concerns we have received from individuals who have had trouble coming in from the previous 1-5pm visiting hours. We hope this change will allow for easier access to loved ones who wish to visit with those hospitalized. This will be effective Friday, April 16th. New signage and community communication is in the works.
4. Death Certificates- Under the Corona Virus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide financial assistance for COVID 19 related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020. As a result, some of our providers may see an increase in individuals requesting death certificate corrections to reflect COVID 19 in the cause of death portion of the death certificate. The NYS Department of Health does not make determinations of the cause of death on the death certificate. The State relies on the medical judgement of the certifier to determine if an amendment to the cause of death is needed. If any of our providers are approached to change the cause of death on a patient's death certificate and would like guidance, please reach out to my office and we will seek appropriate legal assistance as necessary.
5. Travel Restrictions- As of April 10, NYS guidance states asymptomatic travelers from another country, US state, or territory are no longer required to test or quarantine. Consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations, the State recommends quarantine for those who are not fully vaccinated or have not recovered from a confirmed

positive case of COVID 19 in the previous 3 months. The exact language is as follows:
"Asymptomatic travelers entering NY from another country, US State or territory are no longer required to test or quarantine as of April 10, 2021. Quarantine consistent with the CDC recommendations is still recommended for all travelers who are not fully vaccinated or not fully recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID 19 during the previous 3 months. Symptomatic travelers must immediately self-isolate and contact the local health department or their healthcare provider to determine if they should seek COVID 19 testing. The NYS Traveler Health Form must continue to be completed unless the traveler left the State for less than 24 hours or is coming from a contiguous state. Contiguous states are Pennsylvania, NJ, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont."

The above information reflects on some positives in regards to moving away from isolation caused by the pandemic as well as notice that the COVID virus is still in and around our community requiring continued protection and vigilance to hand washing and mask wearing when in public. We will continue with our current PPE guidelines which requires a **mask and face shield** when providing direct patient care. Please remind your staff that a face shield is required when within 6 feet of contact of a patient and/or resident.

I will close with a thank you once again for continuing to perform very well in regards to not only the pandemic but the high volume of patients presenting with significant acuity. This higher acuity is being seen in all areas of our network and again we have responded very well to that. Thank you and please keep up the great work you are doing.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale