



**Oneida Health**  
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April 13, 2020

Dear Fellow Employee,

This morning, our Senior Leadership Team met and discussed a number of matters related to our ongoing battle with COVID-19. We are very focused on following all requirements issued by the Government and CDC as well as looking at our approach to keeping staff, providers and patients as safe as possible. As a result, we will be communicating changes as often as necessary through this ordeal, ensuring that we get it right.

Please note the following updates:

1. Our Visitor Response Plan has been updated to reflect new guidance provided by the State. The changes have to do with allowing a visitor to be present in certain situations. These include hospitalized patients where the patient is intellectually or developmentally disabled, including cognitive impairments (i.e. dementia) and for patients in imminent end-of-life situations. The new guidelines explain the approach that needs to be followed in these situations, which includes PPE to be used by the visitor. I will send this revised plan out this afternoon. The Visitor Response Plan "Addendum" reflects the updated verbiage.
2. We have discovered that 5 employees have recently been tested for COVID-19. The employee health office was not made aware of this testing which is a requirement. I have attached to this update the "Employee & Healthcare Workers Monitoring, Testing and Clearance Process." Please read through this document as it outlines your responsibilities during this pandemic. If we are focused on protecting each other and our patients, then we all need to comply with this. This was originally distributed by Infection Control on April 9<sup>th</sup>.
3. It is also very important that if you have been exposed to COVID-19 from a confirmed positive and were not wearing appropriate PPE, you must immediately contact the Employee Health office. This exposure could be from a family member. As you know, most of the positive COVID-19 cases are outpatient and are living in the community setting. Chances of exposure is greater in that environment as you normally are not wearing full PPE like you do in your work setting. Again, notify the health office immediately upon finding out of the exposure.
4. We have tested a total of 483 individuals. 57 are COVID-19 positive, 413 were negative and there are 13 pending results. We have 4 positive inpatients and 2 inpatients whose results are pending.
5. I have discussed the newly approved Rapid Testing program that will give us test results in less than 30 minutes. This is currently rolled out in New York City. We are anxiously awaiting its rollout in our lab. I will keep you posted on this.

6. Last week we started with testing all admissions to the hospital as well as all admissions to the ECF not from Oneida Health. We have used the ED as the testing area as the majority of admissions to the hospital come through there. We now want to test all direct admits to the hospital as well as all Obstetrical admissions. This will result in all persons entering the hospital for care to be tested. The exception will remain asymptomatic outpatients. Those individuals will continue to be screened upon presentation to the hospital and if symptomatic, referred for testing.
7. In regards to the Obstetrical patients, we will in some cases not have the results back before the patient and newborn are discharged. In those cases, the patient will be notified post discharge of their test results. If positive, the mom will be asked to immediately contact her babies Pediatrician/Family Medicine provider for how she should interact with her newborn.
8. The State has recently returned some ventilators to a facility that sent them to New York City as they were not needed. Unless a surge hits the City, there appears to be no need for our ventilators to be sent there. PPE is another issue altogether as they continue to have a high care demand and PPE is in short supply. We are continuing to work on ordering additional PPE so that we continue to have an adequate inventory. Very concerned about yellow isolation gowns. We are still awaiting our supply of cloth gowns ordered several weeks ago. I hope we will receive them this week.

I will close this update by once again thanking you all for the wonderful responsiveness we have encountered to date. We need to continue to approach this crisis one day at a time. Question/concerns are welcome and can be sent to [anarrow@oneidahealthcare.org](mailto:anarrow@oneidahealthcare.org).

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale  
President and CEO