



April 21, 2021

Dear Fellow Employees,

As you may have read in the media posts, there appears to be a national surge in COVID positive patients mainly focused in certain states. New York State happens to be one of those states identified. As it relates to Oneida Health, we have seen somewhat of a surge of positive patients as well as admissions to the hospital due to the COVID virus. The hope is that this is a temporary setback in regards to the pandemic and that with warmer weather and increased vaccinations, we will go back to a much smaller number of COVID positives being admitted as well as being diagnosed here.

Please note the following:

1. PPE- I am pleased to report once again that we are in excellent shape in regards to our PPE inventory. Our spend on these supplies has gone up considerably but in the end, we are well prepared to ensure that all of our staff have good access to necessary supplies. Please note that we will be once again be fit testing all staff who are required to wear an N95. This is a requirement that we need to do annually and it is in the best interest of our employees to ensure that they are fitted appropriately for the N95 mask which affords them optimal protection when treating COVID positive individuals. I ask that you please cooperate and that you sign up to be fit tested when requested.
2. Visiting Hours- As reported last week, we have changed the hospital visiting hours to 10am-12pm and 4pm-6pm, 7 days per week. We still only allow 2 visitors for each 2 hour visiting session. This limitation is due to our continued concern regarding protecting our patients and staff while the virus is still prevalent in the region. Those hours as well as number of visitors will be evaluated and changed when indicated. In regards to the ECF, I am pleased to report that family members have taken advantage of in person visitation by scheduling those with our ECF staff. This not only includes visitation in the dining room with the resident but also outside visitation when the weather permits. We also continue with our window visits as well as our IPad visits so that family members have good access to their loved ones. Congratulations to the ECF staff once again for making this work for the benefit of the residents.
3. COVID Update- As reported above, we are still seeing COVID positive results. For example, yesterday we performed 192 rapid tests with 3 positive. We also received 12 PCR tests back from Quest, with 1 positive. We currently have 4 COVID positive inpatients and that number is down some since we had some discharges as well as 1 COVID death. That now brings our total deaths since the start of the pandemic to 19. I am pleased to report that the ECF remains with 0 COVID positive residents which is wonderful.
4. State Budget- The State Senate and Assembly have recently approved the State budget for the Governor's signature. The budget has a number of matters included that will impact us. One which seems to be the norm is a 1% Medicaid reimbursement cut. That just adds to year after year of cuts to Medicaid reimbursement programs for providers which is very difficult for us to absorb. There are also several other areas of the budget which we are evaluating that could impact our financial stability. As always, we will do our best to respond to these matters and

provide the highest quality care that we can to those patients and residents who choose us for their care.

As many of you know, we continue to work very hard at recruiting individuals for our current vacancies. Some of those vacancies are due to growth and not turnover. In any event, the challenge is significant in that all healthcare providers that I am aware of in Upstate NY are struggling to find suitable candidates to fill their positions. Our goal is to do our best to recruit an individual who fits into our culture and once we succeed at that, focus on onboarding that individual properly and then not only retaining the new hire, but focus on retaining all staff within our network of services. The management team is currently enrolled in a management training program designed to promote further employee engagement as well as improve retention. One area that I ask all of you to continue to help with is teamwork. Working as a team throughout our organization ensuring that the patient care is optimal is key to our success as well as our ability to provide the highest level of care to those we serve. More to come on both the State budget as well as our recruitment success.

I will close with a thank you once again to all of the Oneida Health staff and providers who have made a positive difference in so many lives over this very challenging 13 months. We continue to have quality outcomes and wonderful patient experience in a safe environment because of you.

With Sincerest Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gene F. Morreale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Gene F. Morreale