



**Oneida Health**  
*exceptional care... always*

April 27, 2020

Dear Fellow Employee,

We are continuing with great trends on the virus which the Governor is responding to with the easing of work restrictions for non-essential workers. This is referred to as the Phase I of the opening up program. In addition, there appears to be a good number of people in our state who have had the virus but did not have as significant of a reaction as the ones we have been reading about. What this could mean is that the overall mortality rate we are aware of today could be much lower when taking all individuals into consideration that had the virus but were not tested. I say all of this as it is potentially really good news and may help us as we face a second season of the virus coming the end of year.

Please note the following updates:

1. Tomorrow we open to elective procedures. As anticipated, this will be a slow ramp up as it takes time to complete the necessary paperwork and schedule the patient. Looks like single digit cases in the OR for this week. Single digit cases scheduled for the following week but there is still time for the surgeons to add on.
2. I continue to be amazed at the number of tele-medicine and phone consults being done in our offices. This technology has proven to be effective in allowing our physicians and physician extenders to provide care during this pandemic. The Provider Leadership Council of Oneida Health is meeting this week to determine ways or how we can continue to utilize this technology and hopefully expand it to continue to meet our community member's health needs. This technology cannot fully replace the hands on care needed at this time, so fully opening up our practices to in-office visits remains a priority. Thank you to our physicians and physician extenders for adopting and adapting to this approach to care so quickly and appropriately.
3. PPE remains something of concern, in particular yellow/blue throw away isolation gowns. We are down to approximately 3 days of inventory based upon current burn rates. We will be sending cloth gowns to the ECF to use as that area is a high utilizer of the gowns due to 11 residents on isolation. As a reminder, all new admissions to the ECF are isolated on our ECF isolation floor until cleared (negative test, asymptomatic) to be placed in the non-isolation units. The plan in the ECF has worked remarkably well with excellent results to date. We need to do all we can to protect our residents as their fragile state makes the virus a deadly infection for them. We have reprocessed 578 N95 masks so far which is great. Thank you for working with us on that program. We currently have an adequate supply of face shields, so if your shield is in need of replacement, please request one.
4. We have tested 832 individuals, 732 negative, 84 positive and 16 pending. We received two pending results yesterday, both positive outpatients. The virus is still in our communities and we need to respect that fact. We have one positive inpatient with 3 inpatients pending.

5. I have been asked about the wage reduction programs and whether they will be expanded. At this time, the 20% salary reduction and the hours reduction programs will end after this upcoming pay check. The involuntary and voluntary furlough will continue for a while yet until we begin to see some positive impact on our volume numbers. I am hoping soon.
6. We continue to advertise for some positions and have been asked about that. There are currently openings in areas where we are in desperate need of staff to meet today's needs. We have been using contract staff as well as overtime to cover. This may be a good time to find those candidates as other providers who had sufficient numbers of staff are furloughing. We will continue to recruit when appropriate. The majority of our vacancies are frozen and we are not recruiting to replace those positions until we better understand the future business climate.

We will continue to work to find sources of PPE to keep our inventory adequate for use by our providers and staff. I thank you for helping us conserve and for being here to care for our patients/residents and for the non-clinical staff, thank you for supporting the care we are providing. Great Team effort to date!

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale  
President and CEO