



August 13, 2020

Dear Fellow Employee,

In my Tuesday update, my closing paragraph was focused on safety of all who work or receive care anywhere in our network. I have two questions that I am asking for your thoughts on. They are as follows:

1. What current work rule would you change or want removed in order to be safer at work?
2. What current rule would you like to see changed so that we can provide safer, better care to our patients and residents?

These are difficult questions as much of what we do is regulated. That does not mean that there are not opportunities though as sometimes we do things because it was a good idea at one time and we continue it for that reason only. Your response to either or both of these questions is appreciated.

Please note the following updates:

- PPE – we are working with the Healthcare Association of N.Y. State (HANYS) to provide them with what PPE shortages continue to worry us in regards to our inability to receive adequate ongoing supplies. HANYS is gathering that information from all NY State facilities and will share with both the State and Federal Governments along with Manufacturers of these items. We are continuing to build our PPE supply to meet the state required 90-day inventory of these items. We are not there yet in several areas and are doing our very best to secure those supplies. Thank you for continuing with your efforts to conserve this very valuable resource. Those efforts have made a difference.
- Testing Center – There have been several comments made on social media criticizing Oneida Health for using the front circle of the hospital as our COVID testing site. Several individuals entering the hospital think this is unsafe and not appropriate as we are potentially exposing them to the virus. My response to those concerns is that we have evaluated this process to ensure that it is safe and do believe that it is. Individuals remain in the car with mask on and window up until the actual swab. The swab process takes no more than 5 seconds and is immediately placed in the tube. During this time, the shedding of the virus, if any, is very low and is in the car. The staff doing the swab is wearing protection as they are within 6 feet of the person who is being tested. No one else is in that 6-foot area during the test. In addition, the majority of people being tested in the circle are only being tested because they are scheduled to have an elective procedure here which is a state requirement. Our very low COVID positive rate for the testing circle reflects that we are not testing many symptomatic patients in the circle. As a result, we will leave the process as is and will add some signage to improve car flow in the circle and to inform those entering the hospital via that sidewalk area of the testing going on.

- COVID 19 Numbers – We have tested 7816 individuals, 7420 negative, 200 positive and currently have 192 pending from Quest. The good news is the oldest pending tests are from 8/10 (6 tests) and the majority are for ECF staff testing. We received 56 results back and all were negative. We remain with one positive inpatient and 0 ECF residents who tested positive. We continue with 3 hospital COVID related deaths. 0 employees have tested positive during the past three weeks.
- ECF Visitor Plan – effective Friday, August 14, the ECF will start to allow visitors for ECF residents. This is a limited visitation plan which I am attaching to today's update for your reference. The goal is to safely permit visitation which is much needed by both the residents and their family members.

We continue to function well during this pandemic. Although our normal business volume has not returned to pre-COVID numbers, we are seeing daily spikes in volume for a number of areas. We are ready for the volume return and I actually am looking forward to it. We are providing safe and patient satisfying care throughout our network, which is a tribute to our providers and staff. This is reflected in the calls, letters and e-mails received from satisfied patients indicating how pleased they were with the care and service you provided. The patients are more aware today of the difficulties health care workers face each day and have a better appreciation, in my opinion, of how well we really do in meeting their health care needs. Please be proud of this accomplishment and continue to build on it.

With Sincerest Gratitude,

Gene F. Morreale
President and CEO