



August 18, 2020

Dear Fellow Employee,

My last update referenced two questions on how we can be safer at work and how can we provide safer, better care to our patients? I received a number of responses, some of which are as follows:

1. Masking- Staff questioned the appropriateness of wearing cloth masks versus medical grade masks. I have attached our policy regarding this. In short, cloth masks are permitted at work but not when interacting with patients (see attached).
2. Infection Control Protocols- We have implemented the necessary PPE protocols as mandated by the CDC and the NYS Health Department. Feedback has been provided that a number of staff are not following the protocol to protect themselves, their co-workers as well as their patients. This is problematic and I ask that each of you take it upon yourself to ask those not in compliance, to comply. You have that right and I ask that you feel free to help protect all. We are still in a pandemic and the COVID-19 virus is still out there to infect us. As a reminder:
 - While at work and when within 6 feet of another individual, a mask must be worn.
 - There should be no eating in patient care areas including centralized nursing stations. Also, cannot wear a mask when eating so remember the 6 foot social distance rule.
 - All patients are required to wear a mask when in our facilities. This includes exam rooms. The virus has been identified to be airborne and indoors it can be in the air for a period of time. Wearing a mask helps contain the virus particles from being airborne.
 - Every patient interaction (again within 6 feet), requires at minimum a surgical mask and face shield. An N95 is required during aerosolizing treatments or when the patient is symptomatic and actively shedding the virus (i.e. cough) and not masked due to need to perform a medical exam. In the ACF and Quick Care, N95 or KN95 masks should be worn, along with face shield, for every patient encounter.
3. COVID-19 Positive Employee- When an employee tests positive, the County Health Department reaches out to that person and determines who else may have been exposed, either at work, at home or in the community. It is a "tracer" process used throughout the state. As a result, if one of your co-workers tests positive and you were identified as being possibly exposed, you will be contacted by the Health Department. In addition, our Employee Health Office staff get involved to evaluate the work area to identify any exposures of co-workers in close spaces for greater than 5 minutes and/or any exposures in which masks were not worn (i.e. lunch time). When staff are identified through this process, we notify the Health Department as well as the exposed employee(s). FYI, there have not been any exposures of this type since we implemented universal masking in mid-March. Again, I stress the importance of wearing a mask, social distancing and frequent hand washing with soap and water to protect yourself!
4. Working from Home- We have implemented a work from home program during this pandemic. The problem is not all positions are appropriate for a work from home approach. Your manager,

in coordination with the senior leader of the organization, will make this determination. For those who cannot work from home, we will provide you with an adequate work space and necessary PPE following established guidelines.

5. Cleaning High Touch Surfaces- We should work together to continually clean all high touch areas. It is not always possible to clean each surface after every patient encounter, but having said that, please do your best to maintain a clean and safe environment. In addition, encourage patients to clean their hands upon entering your area. Signage has been placed in entry areas to remind patients/visitors to hand sanitize upon entering and often thereafter.
6. COVID 19 Results Update- We had 2 positive results on 8/14 from patients in our practices. Other than those 2, there have been 0 positives since. We have tested a total of 8,097 individuals, 7,852 negative, 203 positive with 38 pending. We have 0 COVID positive inpatients at this time. The ECF remains COVID free. There have been 3 hospital deaths as a result of COVID infections.
7. Rapid Testing- We have been able to secure a number of test kits that will allow us to utilize this process for admissions, symptomatic ED patients as well as employees who return from travel to states on the quarantine list. Our supply of these kits remains limited, so we may need to make changes down the road. Will keep you posted.
8. ECF Visitors- Process is working well to date. Compliance from visitors needs to be monitored by staff to protect our residents.

Thank you for continuing to be a part of the care process within our network of services. We have had good success to date and with your continued support and cooperation, that success will continue.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale