



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

December 2, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

I would like to start today's update with some positive news. We just received correspondence from the NYS DOH as follows, "New York State is preparing for the first shipment of COVID 19 vaccinations from the Federal Government, which is expected to ship during the second week of December. The first shipment will be comprised entirely of Pfizer's vaccine. As NYS finalizes distribution of the first allocation, we need to finalize and confirm logistical details with you." So, due to the fact that we have in-house ultra-cold storage capabilities, we will most probably be eligible to receive an early allocation of the vaccine. With this knowledge, we will be working on identifying who amongst our long term care residents as well as our workforce are interested in receiving the vaccine. More to come on this as we develop that process.

Please note the following:

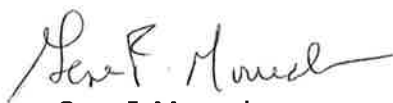
1. PPE- Received some wonderful news this morning regarding our PPE. We are receiving more N95 masks (small teal). We are receiving more KN95's, this type being made in the USA and we are receiving a new shipment of ear loop masks. In addition, we have purchased more re-usable gowns that will help us not only in the hospital setting but also with our current situation in the ECF. Our Purchasing service continues to come through for us in their search for PPE which is very much appreciated. As a result, we remain in a good position with our PPE inventory. Please continue doing what you can to conserve our PPE and use it as the valuable asset that it is. Thank you for that.
2. Test Turn-Around- We have seen a significant improvement in our turn-around time from Quest as a result of continued efforts on our part to pressure them to provide us with results as well as our plan to move our business to a competitor of theirs in order to receive a timely turn-around time. That competitor has told us that the turn-around time for PCR testing will be no more than 48 hours. We continue to move in that direction and will need to add some staff to help because it will be more of a paper process for us than the current Quest arrangement which is electronic. We plan on moving forward with the goal being to have PCR results pending for no more than 48 hours. We did receive a small shipment of rapid test kits that will allow us to continue testing those priority individuals such as symptomatic employees, admissions to the hospital, etc. Will continue to look for additional rapid test kits and once we have an adequate inventory, we will expand its use to other areas such as elective surgeries. If we are able to improve the PCR turn-around time and develop an adequate of supply of rapid test kits, we will be in a much better position to provide results timely and accurately.
3. COVID 19 Test Results- We currently have 7 COVID positive inpatients. We now have 11 COVID positive residents in the ECF. We performed 67 rapid tests yesterday with 2 positive. We also

received 185 results from Quest with 9 positive all coming from our practices. We remain at 6 hospital deaths due to COVID since the beginning of the pandemic.

4. Wearing PPE- I continue to receive complaints that employees are not properly wearing their PPE while at work. I hope you agree with me that this is unacceptable and we cannot allow it to continue. We are exposing our patients and our very frail residents to the COVID virus unnecessarily. I ask each of you to strictly follow the PPE guidelines which includes a mask and face shield when in patient care areas. A mask at all times when not in patient care areas. I also ask that if you see someone not following the PPE guidelines, that you immediately notify them and if they fail to respond appropriately, bring that matter to the attention of the Infection Control office or your manager. We cannot allow disregard of something that is intended to protect our patients, our residents and each other from being exposed to the virus. Please help with this. There is no other way to prevent the spread from going throughout our nursing home as well as within the rest of our organization. Adhering to all PPE guidelines will help us contain the spread of this very aggressive virus.
  
5. Testing Center- We have staffed up some in the testing center and will be able to operate the center Monday-Friday until 5:30pm. This is great news as it will open up more slots for individuals to be tested. With that increase in hours, the plan is to stop testing in our Quick Care offices Monday-Friday and referring all patients to the testing center. The Quick Care in Oneida in all probability will continue to test on Saturday and Sunday when the testing center is closed.

On a lighter note, although we were not able to purchase hams this year due to the financial concerns that the pandemic has caused us, I am pleased to inform you that each employee will receive a pie for the upcoming holiday season. Hopefully you can enjoy this dessert with your loved ones. We have worked together over these 9 months of the pandemic to provide a valuable service to our community members. Please know that those efforts are recognized and very much appreciated.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale