



December 24, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

As you may be aware, the Moderna vaccine was received here at the hospital on Tuesday afternoon. Our COVID Leadership Team met and decided to set up an in-house vaccination program as soon as possible. That began on Wednesday at noon and continued this morning starting at 7am until 11am.

We have had approximately 200 of our organizational members go to Upstate to receive the Pfizer vaccine and will easily approach that number here at the hospital with the Moderna vaccine. We have the Walgreens vaccination initiative scheduled on January 7 and that vaccine program is designed to ensure that the residents are vaccinated and any remaining ECF staff who have not been vaccinated would also be eligible at that time.

Another medical staff, employee vaccination program is scheduled for Monday, December 28 from 7am-11am in the Library Conference Room located on the 1st floor of the hospital. Just show up any time between those hours to receive the Moderna vaccine.

We did receive a number of vaccines designated by the State for certain community mental health organizations, EMT's, Funeral Directors, etc. Those parties have been contacted by Oneida Health informing them that we are ready to vaccinate them. There is a process developed where they can sign on electronically to schedule a vaccination appointment. We will begin that program on Tuesday December 29 at the old Business Office building. This is intended for groups designated by the State and is not open to the general public at this time. A number of staff have asked about spouses. At this time, we are not permitted to use the vaccine other than for those individuals designated by the DOH.

Please note the following:

1. COVID Positive Update- We currently have 11 COVID positive inpatients which is down from the last several days. We currently have 13 COVID positive ECF residents. Although the numbers in the hospital and the ECF are down somewhat, the percentage of positives in the region remains very high.
2. COVID Testing Update- We performed 174 rapid tests yesterday, 24 positive, the majority being from the practices. We received 96 results from Quest yesterday with 6 positive. We currently have 41 tests pending with Quest.
3. Masking- Staff have raised the question "Can I stop wearing a mask after getting the COVID 19 vaccine?" The answer is no for a couple of reasons. Masks and social distancing will still be required for some time after people are vaccinated. To start, the first Corona virus vaccines require 2 shots. Pfizer's second dose comes 3 weeks after the first and Moderna's comes 4 weeks after the first. The effect of the vaccines generally aren't immediate. Full protection is noted 14 days after receiving the second dose. Although there will be some protection within a

couple weeks after the first shot, it is not until the second dose has taken hold there is full protection. It is also not yet known whether the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines protect people from infection entirely or just from symptoms. That means the vaccinated people may might still be able to get infected and pass the virus on although it would likely be at a much lower rate. A short answer to the question is, masking is still mandated by the State and we are obligated to follow that. This includes the use of face shields when in contact with patients and our residents.

4. Visitor Response Plan- Attached is the Visitor Response Plan. Please note, the only change to the attached plan is the Lullaby Center Patients/Obstetrical Patients section. Please print and share/post in your areas as appropriate.

I thank you for taking the time to read these updates since I started sending these in March. It has allowed me to provide information to you that would have been difficult to provide if you did not participate in the communication thread. I would like to continue with these updates for the foreseeable future with the goal of keeping you abreast of what is happening in our organization as well as what is happening in our communities. I have access to a significant amount of information through the DOH, CMS as well as our member organizations such as HANYS and Leading Age.

I will close this update with a wish for a very Happy Holiday season in spite of the challenges the virus has presented us with. For those of you off tomorrow because of the Christmas holiday, I hope you enjoy your time off with family. For those of you who are working over this holiday, please know that your being here for our patients and residents is not only necessary, it is also very much appreciated.

Wishing you all a Happy Holiday,



Gene F. Morreale