



December 29, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

We continue to move down the path of vaccinating more and more individuals. We have been given permission by the State beginning the week of January 4 to offer vaccinations to all outpatient/ambulatory front line high risk providers who provide direct in-person patient care or other staff in a position where they have direct contact with patients such as receptionists, of any age. This will include but is not limited to hospital and community based Ambulatory Care, Primary Care, Outpatient Behavioral Health Services, Phlebotomists, Physical and Occupational Therapists and Specialty Clinics including Dialysis Centers.

As a result of the above, an email will be sent out to those practices who are now eligible to receive the vaccine allowing the opportunity to schedule at our vaccination center. Again, this is located at the old Business Office building on the second level. As a reminder, the lower level is where the COVID Testing Center is located. We have received additional doses of the Moderna vaccine for this population.

Please note the following:

1. Vaccinated Employees- For those employees who went to the Upstate vaccine program for their Pfizer vaccine, it is important that you notify the Infection Control Office at 315-361-2907 or vmilazzo@oneidahealthcare.org of that fact. Again, we are obligated to provide numbers of employees vaccinated and are aware that over 190 of our staff were vaccinated through that program. Only 35 have informed the Infection Control Office of their vaccination status. As stated previously, no individual identifying information is provided via this process. That was done when you registered for the vaccine at Upstate. Our only obligation is to report the numbers.
2. Unvaccinated Employees- We are planning on offering an additional vaccine opportunity for our employees sometime next week. We are finalizing plans for that and I will let you know the date and times over the next few days. In the meantime, we have allocated the 20 remaining doses from our initial shipment and those employees will be vaccinated at our vaccination center on Wednesday. Those who are scheduled to receive the vaccine tomorrow have been given a time to report for that vaccine. Please do your best to be on time.
3. Second Vaccine- We are setting up a process to notify you of the dates/times/location to receive your second dose of the Moderna vaccine through Oneida Health. You will receive an email reminder over the next week to 10 days identifying the dates that will be available for you to receive your second dose. It is very important you understand that the second dose must be administered to you 28 days plus or minus 4 days from the date of your initial vaccine administration. The second dose provides you with the maximum protection from the virus. We will do all we can to ensure there is adequate time for you to receive that second dose. It is your responsibility to make yourself available during the set times to receive the second dose.

4. Vaccine Declinations-The State requires us to maintain a listing of employees who have declined receiving the vaccine. We have developed a declination form and will be sending this out to those employees who have not been vaccinated. I ask that you complete the form and return it to the Infection Control Office so we remain compliant with State requirements for this vaccination program.
5. Madison County- The County informed us on a call today that they are still seeing approximately 40 new COVID positive individuals per day. There are 347 active COVID positive individuals in Madison County. There have been 46 County deaths to date. The County is doing all they can to continue with contact tracing to ensure that individuals exposed are notified.
6. COVID Positives- We currently have 12 COVID positive inpatients in the hospital and 7 COVID positive residents in our ECF. We remain at 14 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. We performed 132 rapid tests yesterday, 33 of which were positive. We have approximately 18 pending tests out to Quest.
7. COVID PCR to AEGIS- Yesterday we started using a new Lab to perform our PCR testing. That requires a different tube which was communicated to all who do swabbing. The reason for the switch from Quest to AGIS was to improve turn-around time for results. The hope is that we will receive the results tomorrow from AEGIS as they had guaranteed a 24-48 hour turn-around time from their receipt of the specimen.

Much of today's update concerns the vaccine program. Please know that we are under significant scrutiny in regards to who we vaccinate. The Governor has threatened significant fines as well as significant penalties to any vaccinator approved program who does not comply with the roll out defined by the State. My plan is to follow those guidelines and ensure that we comply and protect our organization from criticism and financial penalty.

Yesterday we had a significant surge in ED visits that required us to implement our Emergency Preparedness Plan. Thanks to the work of many, the plan worked perfectly and we were able to accommodate the surge and provide care in a very efficient way for those many individuals. No doubt that we will need to continue to utilize this type of effort to respond to future significant patient volume surges. Thank you to the many staff who stepped up to make this work yesterday.

Please continue providing the excellent care you are throughout our network.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale