



Oneida Health
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December 8, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

We have once again seen an increase in the number of COVID positive individuals that we have tested since yesterday. We have also had 4 employees test positive as part of that increased number. In regards to employee positives, we do our best to try to identify if the exposure occurred at work or outside of work. That is problematic as there is no clear avenue to identify the exposure. We believe that our current PPE guidelines are appropriate and effective at preventing the spread at work and continue to push for 100% compliance for all employees. We owe it to each other as well as our patients, residents and family members to ensure strict compliance to wearing required PPE and washing hands regularly. I respectfully request for your cooperation on this important matter.

Please note the following:

1. Oneida Health COVID Update- We currently have 13 COVID positive inpatients. We remain at 8 COVID positive ECF residents. I am told that most are doing relatively well battling this virus and are receiving appropriate care.
2. COVID Testing Results- We performed 75 rapid tests yesterday, 17 of which were positive. We also received 132 PCR results from Quest and 19 of those were positive. That is 36 positives in 1 day which is a record high for us. We currently have 341 PCR tests pending out to Quest. We are close to finalizing our agreement with a second national company for PCR testing and the goal is to complete that and begin that process by early next week or sooner if possible. That will then give us a 24-48 hour turn-around time on our PCR testing which will be very helpful.
3. Madison County- In a phone call discussion with Madison County this morning, they stated that there were 45 new cases yesterday in the County. There are currently 260 active COVID positive individuals in Madison County, and there are 600 individuals on quarantine. The County informed us that they are a week behind on contact tracing due to the volume and the lack of staffing. We are ensuring that our communication to COVID positive patients is complete as once we inform them they are positive, their obligation is to maintain strict quarantine. The tracers will follow up on any persons that the positive individual may have come in contact with. I believe both Onondaga and Oneida County due to their significant increase are also well behind in their contact tracing follow up. What that means is wear your mask when you are out and about and protect yourself and your family members. It is a very uncomfortable feeling to be notified that you have been exposed to COVID and then you wonder if you could have done something different which would then be too late. So please, do all you can to protect yourself as with this surge, we need everyone available to care for the community members and probably more important, we want you to stay well during this pandemic.
4. Governor Cuomo- The Governor directed the DOH to begin implementing State surge influx plans which means hospitals are to increase bed capacity by 25%. As I mentioned in a previous

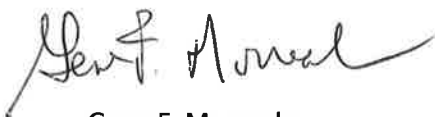
update, we do not have a problem increasing bed capacity as requested. The challenge is staffing for that increased capacity. In the event that we need to increase our bed capacity to accommodate a surge, we will need to discontinue elective surgery and look at allocating all staff throughout the organization to assist. It would be an all hands on deck scenario. I hope and pray that it does not come to that.

5. Testing Center- We have been testing since Monday using the rapid testing in our testing center for symptomatic individuals. We do not currently have enough rapid test kits to test for asymptomatic individuals. Those will continue to be performed via the PCR testing kit and sent out to Quest as well as our new lab shortly. Some staff have asked whether their spouse or children can come in and receive the rapid test. I hope to be able to offer that to you someday soon. The problem today is that we do not have enough rapid test kits to open it up to that number of individuals. We will do so as soon as practical.
6. Symptom Check Sheet- We are updating our symptom monitoring tracking form to incorporate some additional information that has proven to be necessary in determining whether someone should come to work. This is currently used in our ECF and has proven to be very effective. I have attached the updated form to today's email and it will also be replaced in our forms database. Please begin completing this form immediately and follow the directions as outlined on the form.
7. Cyber-Security- I was on a call the other day with CEO's from Upstate NY hospitals and several of the CEO's discussed how their organization was recently hit by a cyber-security attack and they were significantly impacted in that their IT system was not useful due to the attack. Ransomware attacks, which are part of the cyber-security process have gone up 144% in the pandemic era. Although we have a robust strategy to protect our organization, all of us need to be aware not only here at work but also on your phone as well as your home computer that the hackers are out there and looking for an opportunity to gain entryway into our systems. Please do not open any emails or attachments that you are not aware of who the sender is or even if you are receiving from someone you know, and it is not what they would normally communicate with you, don't open it. We have done well so far but it is an opportunity to keep our guard up and protect us from for the bad guys.

These updates are stored on the Employee Resource page on our intranet page. They are there for your review in the event that you wanted to refer back to a previous message. As always, your questions are welcome and we will do our best to respond to those as soon as possible. In the meantime, each and every one of you should feel comfortable approaching a co-worker if they are not properly following established PPE guidelines for the work environment. I cannot stress enough how important this is in helping to protect against the spread of the virus.

Thank you once again for being here for your patients and residents.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale