



Oneida Health
exceptional care... always

December 9, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

The concerning news continues as I have been communicating over the last several weeks. We are seeing the predicted post-Thanksgiving spike and have been warned that the spike after the upcoming holidays could be much worse, per Dr. Fauci. We continue to work to prepare the organization for what comes our way in regards to this pandemic. As is the case in the majority of healthcare facilities in the state and country, staffing becomes the largest challenge. Between the increase in volume of infected patients as well as a number of staff being quarantined due to illness or exposure, the challenge is difficult. We are monitoring staffing daily and working on a surge plan to ensure an adequate staffing mix for the months ahead.

Please note the following:

1. COVID Positives- We now have 16 COVID positive inpatients and remain at 8 COVID positive ECF residents. A number of the COVID positives that were admitted from our nursing home are ready to return to the ECF but regulation forbids that due to them needing a negative COVID test prior to return to their bed at the ECF. This requires a PCR test result.
2. COVID 19 Update- We performed 105 rapid tests yesterday and 27 of those were positive, 5 of the positives were from Employee Health. We received 0 results from Quest. As a result, we have 532 total pending out to Quest. The oldest are from December 3 and the majority are ECF weekly testing of staff and residents. With this high number of positives on the rapid tests alone, there is no doubt with the 532 pending with Quest, that there are a significant amount of positives in that mix. We continue to do all we can with Quest to turn these tests around and we are having minimal success.
3. PPE- There remains some confusion regarding appropriate PPE for staff. We are updating the matrix outlining the type of mask required depending upon where you work. One similarity in all places is that a face shield must be worn over your mask when in patient care areas or in areas where patient care is provided. Again, the virus is airborne and a face shield provides optimal protection for your eyes as well as protection for the mask you are wearing from any droplets in the air.
4. New COVID 19 Testing- We are looking into a newly approved COVID test that uses saliva as the sample. This test can be performed in house and results provided very timely. Our Lab is investigating with the vendor the ability to secure that testing equipment and adequate testing kits to be able to provide that type of test on our campus. We are also pursuing equipment and test kits to perform in house rapid PCR testing.

I will be participating in a phone call today with Governor Cuomo and I am sure it will be focused on the continued spike in COVID statewide. No doubt he will be talking to all of the CEO's of hospitals in the

state regarding the necessary surge plan and staffing requirements to accomplish that. I will provide an update regarding that call in tomorrow's email.

I once again ask that you do all that you can to protect yourself as well as our patients and residents by adhering to PPE guidelines. Thank you for that and keep up the great work.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale