



Oneida Health
exceptional care... always

July 9, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

As you all know, we remain in a national pandemic that continues to take its toll on our economy and the American people. In reading Governor Cuomo's update today, he believes NYS had done it right and therefore we are coming out of this pandemic very well. His statistics included yesterday doing 57,000 tests statewide with 684 positives (1.2% positive rate). It appears that more of NYS will open soon as a result of our low rate of COVID infection.

Please be aware of the following:

1. As noted above, we remain in a healthcare crisis and it is important that you continue to strictly adhere to the guidelines that we have instituted to protect ourselves as well as our patients. This includes wearing a face shield over your mask when providing patient care. This is still required even if the patient has been deemed COVID negative by testing. As I have stated in previous correspondence, the false negative results are significant enough that we should remain vigilant in regards to protecting ourselves. Also keep in mind that the surgical masks that we are wearing in many patient care areas are not enough protection to keep you safe from the virus. Therefore, the face shield together with the surgical mask provides optimal protection.
2. PPE- On the national news last night there was a segment regarding a shortage of PPE throughout the country. Although we have sufficient inventory at this time, the failure to continue to receive supplies of PPE will cause that inventory to erode quickly. We have just been informed that N95 masks will not be delivered until the end of August. In the meantime, we continue to search for other providers of this PPE so we can secure masks as soon as possible. The blue gloves remain difficult for us to secure and we continue to work on that. Some good news is that we found head caps and bouffants that are able to be laundered that we will be purchasing which will definitely help us in regards to that PPE type. I thank you and ask that you continue to do all you can to preserve our PPE and use it appropriately.
3. I received several questions from staff regarding travel restrictions and impact on individuals receiving services here. If a person is known to have traveled to a hotspot or internationally, they must quarantine for 14 days prior to being eligible to receive elective surgery or procedures here. That 14 day quarantine is a state mandate and applies to all individuals again who travel to those designated areas. A negative pre-procedure COVID result does not stop the quarantine requirement.
4. In regards to students and testing, if a student is working in the ECF during their time here, they must be tested weekly as required by state mandate. In the event that a student is coming in to the hospital proper or practices, they must perform the mandatory screening which includes temperature and symptom monitoring each day. If a student becomes symptomatic, they should immediately contact our Employee Health Office.

5. It is important that we continue daily when working the self-monitoring. This is a twice a day requirement where you must document your temperature and symptoms. Once your sheet is complete, please turn that in to your manager for retention purposes in the event we are audited. Again the protection of our patients and our co-workers is of utmost importance and it takes everyone within our organization to cooperate to ensure that we are indeed safe.

6. We received results for our COVID testing in the circle as well as in our practices. For July 8, we have tested a total of 5,260 individuals with 4,967 negative, 166 positive with 127 pending. In regards to testing results on that date, we received 50 back with 1 positive that we scheduled for surgery.
For July 9, we tested a total of 5,282 individuals with 4,967 negative, 166 positive with 131 pending. We did not receive any results back from Quest and did 18 rapid tests here all negative. We continue with 2 COVID positive inpatients and unfortunately, we had an inpatient expire yesterday from COVID.

7. In regards to our testing circle, it appears that we are in for a continuation of that for the foreseeable future. With that said, we need to free up the nurses now covering the circle to provide care within the hospital proper. Therefore, we will be looking for other healthcare professionals to join us to staff the circle and perform the swab testing. Individuals eligible would include emergency medical personnel including Emergency Medical Technicians Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics, Phlebotomists, Certified Nurse Assistants, Dental Hygienists, Veterinary Technicians and students in nursing and medical programs. We will get an ad out on Indeed letting people know we are looking to hire staff with that background to staff the circle testing. If you know of anyone please ask them to contact our HR office. We would like to do this sooner rather than later.

We continue to do very well as an organization which is a tribute to all of you. I appreciate very much your continuing to practice according to established guidelines. Masking remains a key part of that process.

Thank you again and keep up the great work.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale