



**Oneida Health**  
*exceptional care... always*

June 4, 2020

Dear Fellow Employee,

The news remains positive in regards to new COVID cases in our area as well as new COVID cases statewide. This appears to be giving the Governor more leeway in regards to opening up the State and reducing the amount of social isolation required. This still requires us to have our guard up as the COVID virus is still out there and it is our responsibility to continue to protect ourselves as well as our patients and residents. Thank you for all you have done to date to make that happen.

Please note the following updates:

1. In regards to PPE inventory, we are doing very well in regards the majority of our PPE. We have also had significant success in retesting staff who had been wearing the small size N95 masks and have been able to move them to a regular size which has definitely helped in regards to our burn rate of the small N95's. Thank you all so much for helping conserve our PPE and utilize it appropriately. It has definitely made a difference.
2. In regards to reprocessing N95 masks, we have continued to receive feedback from staff that the reprocessed mask is just not the same as the original mask. The fit does not appear to be as appropriate as it was when new and also shreds of certain material within the mask seem to be coming out as staff breathe. With that as the concern, we will no longer be reprocessing N95 masks. Although the reprocessing has helped us during these months, the negative feedback from staff warrants this decision. Thank you to those who have participated in the reprocessing. In the meantime, we will continue to do our best to find a supply of small N95's to rebuild our inventory of that mask.
3. There was discussion at this morning's COVID leadership team meeting regarding students and when they should be allowed to return to our organization. It is important that we continue to be a place of learning for our students as those are our future healthcare workers and providers. With that said, I am requesting that the managers forward to Andrea Narrow the list of students that we have been accommodating and plan to accommodate again once we remove the current restriction. This way we will be able to determine whether we have adequate PPE and the ability to safely bring those individuals into our organization. A decision will be made in the near future.
4. In regards to our COVID testing updates, the following is from June 3. We have tested 2687 individuals, 2484 negative, 146 positive and 57 pending results. We received 187 results back on June 3 as follows: Elective Procedure 41/0, Inpatient testing 15/0, ED 5/0, Practices including Quick Care 15/2 and ECF Staff 109/0. We currently have 1 positive inpatient as of today and 6 inpatients results pending.

COVID results for June 4 are as follows: 2718 tested, 2537 negative, 146 positive, 35 pending results. On 6/4 we received 53 results as follows: Elective Procedure 17/0, Inpatient testing 4/0, ED 2/0, Practices 10/0 and ECF Staff 20/0. On the inpatient unit, we have 0 positive COVIDs and we have 12 inpatient tests pending.

5. I want to take a moment to recognize our many practices, both Primary and Specialty care out in the community. Looking at recent data, we are seeing a nice increase in patients who are presenting in person for care versus using telemedicine and phone. This is definitely a good sign I do want to thank all our practice staff as well as providers for what they do each work day to meet the continuing needs of their patients. We have been doing ok due to the fact that insurers including Medicare and Medicaid had been paying us for phone consultations as well as increased the reimbursement rate for telemedicine services. We are now receiving word from those insurers that they are going to reduce telemedicine payments back to the pre-COVID days and also stop paying for phone consultations. This is problematic in that a number of patients are still afraid to come into the practice for care and now we will need to provide those services at a significant financial loss. With that aside, we have a very solid Primary and Specialty Care network of services for which we should all be proud.

Many of you may have noticed that our US flag on campus remains at half staff. That was lowered per direction from both Albany and Washington in honor of those individuals who expired due to this COVID pandemic. We will continue to keep it at half staff until receiving direction to raise it to full mast.

Thank you all for your continued great work.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale  
President and CEO