



Oneida Health
exceptional care... always

November 17, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

We continue to prepare internally in the event that the vaccine against COVID is made available to us in December. In reading today's updates online, the Health and Human Services Administrator, Mr. Azar vowed to move as quickly as possible to clear the vaccine for use and potentially immunize 20 million Americans in December. That appears to be really good news as we continue as a nation to struggle to control the virus's spread.

Please note the following:

1. Masks- I have been asked to clarify how often masks should be changed out. For ear loop masks, they should be changed out daily. These currently are readily available for purchase. In regards to N95 masks, literature recommends that they be changed out every 2-3 days. We would like our staff to utilize them if unsoiled for a maximum of 2 days. If soiled in anyway, then they should be changed out when soiled. The N95 mask situation continues to be problematic and as we increase the burn rate, replenishment becomes somewhat problematic. We are continuing to work diligently to secure N95 masks so that there is adequate supply for all of our staff who require a N95 to perform their duties.
2. COVID Testing Results- We performed 76 rapid tests yesterday with 1 positive, 75 negative. We received 10 results from Quest, 2 positive from our practices. The number of 3 positives seems good and that we are heading in the right direction. The problem is that we have been moving more towards PCR testing sent out to Quest and now have 113 pending out to Quest, the majority being from our practices where we are seeing an uptick in positive COVID cases. Therefore, the numbers should be looked at with the idea that we will see more positives from yesterday when those PCR test results are returned to us. Madison County currently has a 2.3% COVID infection rate. They are averaging close to 13 new cases per day. To earn yellow status category by the Governor's criteria, we would need to reach an infection rate of 3.5% and average 15 new cases a day. As you will note, we are inching closer to those thresholds.
3. Testing Center- We are moving towards doing 100% PCR testing in our testing center due to the lack of rapid test kits. We continue to work with our supplier to secure more rapid test kits. As noted in last week's update, rapid test kits will be used for symptomatic employees as well as symptomatic patients in our ED who will be admitted. It is also used for other elective admissions to the hospital such as OB.
4. Employee Testing- We have opened an employee testing area off the hospital lobby using the rapid testing kit Monday-Friday from 1:30-2:30. An appointment is necessary so please call Infection Control office at 315-361-2907 to schedule yourself to be tested if symptomatic.

5. Symptom Tracker- We have been using the Symptom Monitoring Tracking form since the start of the pandemic. I have attached the form to today's update. Please ensure that each of you is completing this tracking form each day and documenting your symptoms. Please return those to your manager when they are filled. This is important information that we may need to provide to State and Federal agencies in the event there is an outbreak here.

In my updates I try to recognize departments and services when that specialty service is being recognized nationally. Some of these services work behind the scenes every day to make it possible for us to provide care throughout our network of services. One such service is our IT service. Mohammed Mere has recently sent out a survey to all of you to get feedback on how this service is performing. Hopefully you will take the time to provide him with meaningful feedback especially when you want to recognize someone within that department. I personally am very pleased with how IT has supported us not only each and every day, but during crisis times that the pandemic has caused. So please, when you see a representative from IT or someone from IT is assisting you in resolving a problem, recognize their efforts and thank them for being there when we need them. They are available 24/7/365.

I will close by simply saying thank you to all of you for continuing this difficult battle with the virus. I believe we are winning and hopefully with the vaccine soon to be available, the end of the battle will be in sight. Continue your great work and thank you once again.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale