



Oneida Health
exceptional care... always

October 20, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

Communications from both the Federal Government and the State Government continue to come in daily with changes that continue to impact healthcare providers. Some good and some not so good. It appears that we are in for a challenging fall and winter season and my promise is to continue to do all we can in this organization to protect you, our patients and our residents.

Please note the following:

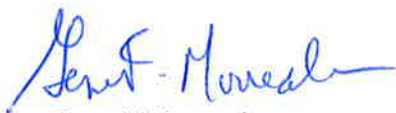
1. PPE- The new KN95 masks that we received from a vendor appear to be somewhat problematic in that the straps are breaking easily as is the nose guard. We are looking at that to determine if there was a change in the production methodology used. In the event you are using the KN95's and are having problems with them, please inform your manager so that we can keep our Purchasing Director up to date as to the issues. Otherwise, we continue with ordering the necessary supplies to ensure adequate inventory to meet patient and resident needs.
2. Testing Center- We continue to be overwhelmed at times with the number of tests being requested. As I had stated previously, the testing center is equipped to do COVID testing as well as flu testing. The strep testing has been approved to be performed there and the hope is that we will be able to provide that service sometime next week. I will update you further on that. We are also looking at starting rapid COVID testing in our Quick Care service to reduce the number of tests being done at the testing center. That too may occur as early as next week depending on receiving the necessary approvals to offer that test at the Quick Care facilities. We will start in Oneida Quick Care and then roll it out to the Camden Quick Care office at a later date.
3. COVID Order Form- As a reminder, all of our practices who utilize Medent as their electronic health record have means on the system to order the COVID test and have it sent directly to the testing center. Please refrain from writing orders and faxing them over to the center as that creates additional work for the staff. For non-Medent practices, we have developed an electronic order form on the Oneida Health webpage under the Employee Resources section. Please go there and complete the form. It is a very efficient process and by hitting the submit button, the form is automatically sent to the testing center. We believe this is easier for you as the ordering provider and for us as the receiver of the request for testing.
4. Visitor Response Plan- I have attached the recently revised Visitor Response Plan. We added information to the response plan for the physician practices as well as made a change for Obstetrics. With feedback from our physicians, we are now allowing the one visitor to leave the Obstetrical or Labor and Delivery Unit and return on the same day. This is one out and in only per day. This way, the spouse or significant other will have the ability to leave and come back on the same day.

5. Employee Testing in the ECF- The Department of Health has granted permission for us to start using the rapid test for our employee testing in the ECF. This is good news as it provides us with in-house control over the testing and allows us to turn those tests around very quickly. Currently, the PCR test which is sent to Quest takes anywhere from 2-5 days to receive the results. The rapid test can be used moving forward and we are working on a process to do just that. The hope is that when testing is done next week on our ECF employees, we will be able to use the rapid testing.
6. Madison County- There has been a slight uptick in active COVID individuals within Madison County. We currently have 25 active COVID positive cases, half of those are college students and the other half are community members. No cluster has been identified but social events and travel have been identified as the cause for the uptick.
7. School Aged Children- We have been informed by the Department of Health that they are recommending that ill children be assessed by their healthcare provider and tested for COVID 19 before returning to school. In order to return to school without COVID testing, the parent would need to provide a note from the child's healthcare provider diagnosing a known chronic condition or a confirmed acute illness and that COVID 19 is not suspected. A diagnosis of an unconfirmed acute illness such as a viral upper respiratory illness or viral gastroenteritis is not sufficient and COVID 19 testing will be required. If the child is not seen by a provider and/or tested for COVID 19 within 2 days of symptoms, they will be considered COVID 19 positive and the local Health Department will be required to conduct a full case investigation and contact tracing. If the student is diagnosed with a confirmed acute illness such as lab confirmed flu or strep, the parent/guardian will need a note that states the healthcare provider does not suspect COVID and that the student can return to school when they are feeling better.
8. COVID Testing- We currently have 1 COVID positive inpatient. This individual was discharged from a Syracuse hospital with 2 negative COVID tests and upon presentation to our ECF, tested positive by rapid test. As a result, that resident was transferred to our hospital for COVID care. We have tested 13,090 individuals to date, 12,860 negative, 218 positive and we remain at 3 COVID deaths. There currently are no COVID positive ECF residents. We only have 6 tests pending at this time.

As I have communicated, the process for management of this pandemic continues to be developing before our eyes. We are doing all we can to respond positively to the requirements to ensure that we are compliant as well as safe. I again ask that you please do all that you can to protect yourself and your co-workers by following our PPE requirements including a face mask and face shield when providing care to patients and residents as well as washing your hands with soap and water frequently throughout the day.

Thank you once again for all you are doing for our patients and our residents and for the community at large.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale