



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

October 27, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

Since last week's update, we have had a number of positive COVID results from members of our community, all resulting in outpatient treatment. The need for admission was not required for any of the recent COVID positive patients.

In conversations with the Madison County Health Department, they are seeing a county wide increase. For example in September, the COVID infection rate was .4 and in October it is up to .9. Again, that is the rate of infections per tests performed. Even so, the numbers do reflect a surge in our region. This has also been evident in Onondaga County.

With the above in mind, I respectfully request that all of us follow the PPE guidelines with the goal of protecting yourself from the virus. I do understand how difficult and challenging it is to wear that PPE throughout the workday and be able to perform your tasks as efficiently as you did prior to the pandemic. Having said that though, we have had no employees be exposed to the virus while at work which is a truly phenomenal outcome to date. To continue with that result, the enforcement and following of PPE guidelines must occur. Your cooperation and attention to this matter is so important and very much appreciated.

Please note the following:

1. PPE Update- We continue to do well with our PPE inventory. Although we have not met the 60 (ECF) and 90 (ACF) day requirements of the DOH, we do have a good solid base of inventory that will allow us to meet your needs for the foreseeable future for PPE supplies. We will continue to seek out all potential avenues to shore up areas where our supply is not as deep as we would like it to be inventory wise. We are doing that sometimes at a cost that is significantly higher than we want to pay but in the end, we will ensure adequate supply for all of our employees and providers.
2. Testing Center- We had a delay in implementing the stand alone equipment in the testing center in order to perform the COVID test, the flu test and the strep test at the center itself. Facilities and IT are working on addressing those issues and I am told we should be operational by this Thursday. Quite a few people had been involved in this process and all are functioning really well as a team to make it happen.
3. Flu Vaccine- We are at 74.6% of our employees who have accepted the flu vaccine. A small percentage have declined the vaccine. That means that we have approximately 25% of our employees who have not accepted nor declined the vaccine. It is important that you do either and my recommendation remains that you take the vaccine as there is no doubt it will provide you added protection during the upcoming flu season. Recalling previous flu seasons, when it hits, it usually hits hard and spreads quickly. With the flu, you will see your immune system


struggle making you perhaps more susceptible to the COVID virus. Please do what you can to protect yourself by taking advantage of something that does work which is the flu vaccine.

4. COVID Testing Results- We performed 78 rapid tests yesterday with 1 positive. This was a person who was exposed by his spouse who recently tested positive. The remaining 77 were negative. We did receive 3 results from Quest, all negative. To date we have tested 13,666 individuals, 13,417 negative, 227 positive and we remain at 3 hospital deaths since the start of the pandemic. We have 0 COVID positives in our ECF. We currently have 16 tests pending at Quest. There are no positive COVID inpatients at this time.

The next several weeks will be challenging for us as US citizens. We have an election next week that no doubt will result in some angst among many of us one way or another. We are all under strain and fatigue due to a number of things that we are facing each and every day. Please do not be afraid to access resources and assistance as you deem fit. Your mental health is not only important for your ability to function well at work, it also will assist you with your after work life. A new term out in the literature is compassion fatigue which is a condition that occurs when caregivers are overwhelmed by stresses stemming from either the clinical or interpersonal components of their job. Studies have shown that those affected by compassion fatigue are unable to deliver the highest quality care and are at risk for burnout. Remember we are in this together and we should continue to support each other as best we can.

Thank you so much for your caring and for the great work that you do each and every day for Oneida Health.

With Sincerest Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gene F. Morreale". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gene F. Morreale