



October 29, 2020

Dear Fellow Employees,

As you are aware, the spike that was discussed earlier that may occur this fall has presented itself. If you are reading online media, there have been exposures at businesses in Madison, Oneida and Onondaga Counties. If we see a continued spike in the COVID prevalence in our areas, we will be taking additional steps to protect our patients and residents from exposure. This will include close focus on PPE adherence by all staff, social isolation when not wearing a mask as well as reducing access to the organization such as through reduced visiting hours.

Please note the following:

1. Travel- The Infection Control office sent out a notice yesterday to all employees regarding what your responsibility is when you are traveling to areas that are currently restricted which is most of the US. I have attached that same memo to today's update in case you missed it. You need to follow this to the "T" in order to protect your co-workers as well as our patients and residents. Please print and post this in a conspicuous space within the office so that everyone is aware of this important requirement.
2. Social Events- Everyday in newsletters, there are documented stories about individuals being infected by attending either weddings, birthday parties or other social parties. There is no way possible to stop those events from happening and therefore, you should consider being tested if you do attend a large gathering and there is the potential for exposure due to non-adherence to PPE as well as social distancing. In my opinion, it is better to be safe than expose your co-workers and our patients and residents.
3. CEO Updates- There have been a number of questions raised or lack of knowledge regarding information that has been regularly communicated in my CEO update. What that tells me is that either it is not being read or it is not comprehended by those reading it. I will speak to the management staff about ways to better engage employees in regards to our COVID protection plans. In the meantime, if you in your respective areas could ensure that your co-workers are aware of what is being communicated and even again posting these updates for reference. Placing them in a binder will ensure that it is readily available and will not be in violation of infection control standards in regards to posting plain paper. All paper posted should be in a cleanable document such as a plastic sleeve or laminated.
4. Testing Center- Please be advised that our testing center is currently doing all rapid testing for COVID 19. We have the equipment now down at the testing center along with the Laboratory Technician to process testing onsite. For the providers reading today's update, please let your pre-procedure patients know that the testing center will be calling them to schedule an appointment for testing 1-2 days prior to the procedure. They do not need to contact the center themselves. Please request that your patients answer the calls from our testing center to avoid our having to make numerous calls to reach them. It is in the patient's best interest as well as

yours that this be done efficiently so that no patient gets missed and results in a potential cancelled procedure.

5. COVID Vaccine- We have completed and submitted our application to become a vaccine center for the COVID vaccine when it becomes available. I am told that NYS will receive about 10,000 doses of the vaccine at the end of November which will most likely mean that we will not see any at that time. I would think that we will receive the vaccine sometime in early 2021 to be made available to our employees and providers as well as our ECF residents. From there, we will roll this out to our practice patients and then eventually to the community at large. Much planning needs to be done prior to that point but our intent is to make the vaccine as readily available as possible with the goal of significantly reducing the prevalence of COVID 19.
6. PPE- Currently according to our Director of Materials Management, we are "doing good with everything." That continues to be wonderful news as we have had great success in securing necessary PPE for your use. I continue to ask that you do all you can to conserve our PPE and that will go a long way to helping us continue with our current practice of having sufficient amount of PPE for your use.
7. Contact Tracing- I have also attached our approach to contact tracing when someone within our network has tested positive and we need to ensure that would not result in further spread of the virus to those that person came in contact with. Please review the attachment and again feel free to print out and leave for others to read so that they are aware of how we approach the contact tracing within our organization.
8. Cyber Attacks- We have been warned by both the Federal and State Governments that hackers are seeking to hold American hospitals data hostage in exchange for ransom payments. Our IT service sent out a notice last night regarding attacks that are occurring during this COVID and election time period. Please take great care in ensuring that you do not respond to phishing emails. Better to delete than take a chance that it is something that was truly meant for you. Please follow our policies regarding email to the fullest extent possible. We need to protect this organization from those hackers.
9. COVID Results- We performed 68 rapid tests yesterday with 1 employee testing positive. The 67 others were negative. We have received 0 results from Quest and 151 are currently pending. To date, we have tested 13,935 individuals, 13,549 negative, 229 positive, and we remain at 3 hospital deaths. We currently have 0 COVID positive patients in the hospital and 0 COVID positive residents at the ECF.

I very much appreciate you taking the time to review this correspondence as it is sent out twice a week. Please ensure that your co-workers have an opportunity to review them as communication at this time is very important. Hand washing with soap and water remains the gold standard for prevention of infection by COVID as well as wearing your PPE properly. Please take great care in breakrooms when you are having a meal that you maintain an adequate distance between you and your co-workers.

Once again, thank you for all you have done to date to make Oneida Health truly exceptional.

With Sincerest Gratitude,
Gene F. Morreale

