



Oneida Health
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September 1, 2020

Dear Fellow Employee,

Per the Governor's update yesterday, we are in day 184 of the pandemic. There are 418 people currently hospitalized in New York State with 109 of those in an ICU setting. Those numbers represent the lowest daily numbers since the pandemic started. COVID positive rate statewide is .9%. One person in the state died from COVID 19 within the last 24 hours.

The above is positive news for the state and specifically our region where the numbers are good. In regards to Madison County, we are currently at a .5% infection rate countywide. There are 555 individuals currently in quarantine in Madison County. About 60% are due to travel restrictions and 40% are due to college campus matters. The county currently has 24 COVID positive patients with 18 of those at Colgate University. In spite of these positive numbers, the virus remains a threat to our safety and the safety of our patients and residents and therefore we need to continue with our appropriate practice of following the CDC guidelines and wearing our PPE per policy.

Please note the following:

1. ECF- We had 1 employee in our ECF become COVID positive. This person had worked in the ECF and therefore required us over the weekend to test all residents and staff per DOH guidelines. Through the significant support of our Laboratory personnel as well as staff in our ECF we were able to pull this off and all were tested. I am pleased to report that all tests came back negative. The employee is currently on quarantine and as a result per DOH guidelines, we needed to once again restrict visitation in the ECF for 28 days. Visitation will occur once again beginning on September 26. In the meantime, we will continue with window visitation as well as using iPads for family members to talk to their loved ones. ECF employees have followed the PPE guidelines very well and I believe this is the reason we have not had the spread of the virus to our residents. Thank you ECF staff.
2. PPE- Some good news on the PPE front. We've been able to secure a contract for duck-bill N95's. These are real N95's and staff who have used the duck-bill style report that they are very comfortable. We are currently testing those even though we were told they meet the necessary requirements for an N95. Once our testing is complete and we have the results we need we will secure these N95's which should allow us to meet the need through the upcoming flu season as well as any uptick in COVID cases. This is exciting as N95 masks are very difficult to come by especially the small size. In addition, the remainder of our PPE is in good shape and per NYS, we are obligated to certify that we have 90 days of PPE supply in inventory by the end of September. We are continuing to work towards that and we believe we should be able to accomplish that requirement by the end of the month.
3. The NYS Health Department announced an emergency rule Monday that requires testing to distinguish whether individuals are infected or die from the Coronavirus or influenza as the flu

season approaches. The new regulation which goes into effect immediately, requires coroners and funeral directors as well as hospitals and nursing homes to test for both illnesses for those who expire within 48 hours of death. The testing will also be required of any hospital patient or nursing home resident who may have been exposed or who has symptoms consistent with either COVID or flu. In addition, coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors are required to perform COVID 19 and influenza tests when someone dies "unattended" by medical or nursing personnel such as at home. The state's goal with this new requirement is to ensure the most accurate data possible as the state continues to manage COVID 19 while preparing for flu season.

4. COVID Testing Update- We currently have 1 COVID positive inpatient. We have performed a total of 9,338 tests with 209 positive and 9,054 negative. We only have 71 tests pending as of today. We received 147 test results yesterday and all were negative.
5. Flu Shots- Our team here is working towards offering the flu shot to all employees. The CDC as well as the NYS DOH strongly encourage all employees to get their flu shot. Even though we are required to wear masks which is one of the requirements of those who did not avail themselves of the flu shot in past years, it remains important that you give every consideration to getting your flu shot this year. More to come in regards to the date we will begin offering shots to our employees.
6. NYS Travel Restrictions- Governor Cuomo once again added Montana and Alaska to the states on the travel restriction list.

It remains challenging for us in this current environment. We have had great success in protecting our patients, residents as well as each other due to our staff buying in to wearing PPE appropriately while at work. I once again ask that you continue with this approach as it has made a difference and will continue to make a difference into the upcoming flu season.

Thank you all for your continued hard work and for all you do for our patients and residents as well as for each other.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale