



January 12, 2022

Dear Fellow Employees,

Recent talk out of Albany is that we are reaching the crest of the post-holiday surge of COVID infections. It appears that way from looking at our numbers of COVID positives which I commented on below. In the meantime, we are seeing a good number of staff test positive which continues to negatively impact our ability to cover all of the services we need to cover to meet our patient's needs. As you may know, we have already discontinued elective procedures here and are only performing essential procedures. In addition, we have stopped doing essential Endoscopy during this week and staff were willing and supportive of helping out in high volume areas due a number of employees being out sick. That has worked well and much appreciation to our Endo staff for helping out where needed. We cannot delay essential Endoscopy procedures any longer as that is not appropriate for patient care and will be back to performing only essential procedures starting Monday January 17<sup>th</sup>.

Please note the following:

1. COVID Positives- We currently have 15 COVID positive inpatients which is near the record high number we have had since the pandemic started back in early 2020. In addition, we have 17 of our ECF residents that are positive at this time. That too, is near the record number of high cases we have had since the start of the pandemic. As you know, this is problematic in that patients require treatment and the effective infusion therapy drug is in short supply. We are doing all we can to secure that monoclonal antibody therapy that works against the Omicron variant and provide to our patients. Again, limited amounts of supply are hindering our ability to do that.
2. Testing- We performed a high number of rapid COVID tests yesterday, 136 with 24 positive. We sent 10 PCR tests to Quest with 7 positive. We also did 77 Binax tests with 6 positives. Bottom line, significant amount of COVID positive patients are in and around our community and region.
3. Booster Requirement- We have been notified that yesterday the Department of Health received approval to require that healthcare workers receive a booster of the vaccine when eligible. We have not received any of the details as to the effective date of this requirement as well as enforcement that will be pursued by the DOH. Once we are made aware, we will share that with you. In reviewing literature regarding the Pfizer vaccine, they will be releasing a revised vaccine soon that is more effective against Omicron. Again, once more details are received from the DOH, I will communicate that to all of you.
4. Vaccine Administration- We continue to offer the COVID vaccine as well as the flu vaccine for all of you who may be interested. Please reach out to the Employee Health Office to schedule yourself. The flu is now prominent in most of Upstate NY including Madison and Oneida Counties. Just another area that we all need to be concerned about.
5. PPE- As a reminder, you should all be wearing surgical grade masks while in the hospital setting. Cloth masks have been determined to not be acceptable in a healthcare environment by the CDC and the DOH.

2022 has not started the way we all imagined it would. If the Governor's office is correct and we are at the most recent surge crest and vaccine boosters are being designed to be more effective against this highly transmissible virus, we may quickly get back to more normalcy in regards to the spread of this virus. Please keep your guard up and do all you can to protect yourself, our patients and residents as well as your friends and family members.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale