



January 5, 2022

Dear Fellow Employees,

I will start off today's update with a wish for all of you to have a Happy and hopefully Healthy 2022. The healthy part appears to be a challenge these days with the post-holiday surge of the COVID virus. In any event, my hope is that you and your family and friends somehow stay healthy during this recent spike in COVID cases.

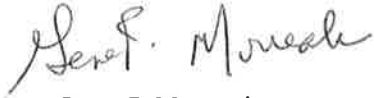
Please note the following:

1. COVID Positives- We currently have 10 COVID positive inpatients in the hospital and what is new is that we have 7 COVID positives in our Extended Care Facility. In regards to the ECF, no doubt that with the prevalence of COVID in our community that it is a good chance that visitors as well as staff may bring the virus into the facility. It was a matter of time. The effort now is to provide care and treatment to the residents at the ECF as well as isolate and prevent any further spread of the virus. Easier said than done though as visitation cannot be stopped in the long term care facility per federal regulations and staff continue to be exposed outside of work which is difficult to stop.
2. Testing- We performed 59 rapid tests yesterday and 20 were positive which is a very high percentage. PCR tests done were 53 with 16 positive. NYS overall has an over 20% positivity rate when it comes to COVID test results. Madison County also remains quite high.
3. PPE- Masking as well as proper hand washing are the weapons we have today other than receiving the vaccine. The vaccine as you know does not prevent you from becoming COVID positive, but all indications show that the acuity is much lower for individuals who are fully vaccinated and have received their booster at the appropriate time. Although a number of people do not see the benefit of masking to prevent the spread of COVID, it is a federal and state requirement to wear your mask at all times while in a healthcare setting. This goes not only for staff but for visitors. Please understand that you could be COVID positive and spreading the virus prior to becoming symptomatic. Therefore, if everyone wears their mask properly, it does provide some protection.
4. Staffing- We continue to struggle with filling vacancies as well as keeping staff at work due to illness of staff. This in the end creates problems in our ability to meet the needs of the many individuals who present for care within our healthcare network. I personally believe under these current circumstances, we have done quite well which reflects very well on each and every one of you. The hope is we get through this latest surge and moving forward will have less of the issues created by the COVID virus to deal with. We will still need to recruit and retain staff to the best of our ability and there is no doubt that the community need for our services will continue to be significant moving forward.
5. Testing Center- We are looking at ways to increase staffing as well as volume of patients that we can accommodate in our testing center. We have sufficient space with the limiting factor being staffing as well as testing kits. We believe if we are able to successfully increase that capacity, it

will have a significant reduction of traffic for testing in our ED as well as our practices. Therefore, the staff that we have in those settings can focus on patient illness rather than COVID testing. Again, we are trying to develop that testing center more fully moving forward.

Please accept my gratitude and appreciation for all you continue to do to provide care and support to the provision of care within Oneida Health. Each and every one of you has an important role in helping our community members through a very challenging time. Many of you are working extra hours to help meet the needs of the community members which again is greatly appreciated.

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