



June 18, 2021

Dear Fellow Employees,

By now everyone is aware that the COVID 19 pandemic although still somewhat of a problem, has been pretty well controlled in our region and the State as a whole. The State, via the Governor's office is removing the majority of restrictions placed during the pandemic which definitely is a positive.

Please note the following:

1. Masks- Although many restrictions have been rescinded, the wearing of masks in healthcare facilities as of today is still a requirement. We have asked the question as to whether individuals who have been vaccinated could remove the masks at work and are awaiting a response on that. So for now, please continue to wear your mask while at Oneida Health other than in non-patient care buildings (Oxbow, Northside).
2. Employee Gym- The employee gym is going through terminal cleaning as we speak and the goal is to open it on Monday June 21. We will provide cleaning materials for those who use the gym with the expectation that they will wipe down the equipment used so it is clean and ready for the next individual to use for exercise purposes.
3. COVID Positives- We had an ECF resident test positive for COVID last week and that individual has been admitted to the hospital. We continue to test that resident's roommate as well as the rest of the facility as required by the State and I am pleased to report that there have been no other positives identified. As of today, we have 1 COVID positive hospitalized patient. The hope is that the small number of COVID positives will continue and eventually go away.
4. Volume and Staffing- We have been challenged recently with a surge in volume in the hospital as well as the Emergency Department. The explanation for the surge in volume is difficult to find. Many blame it on individuals delaying care due to the pandemic now needing a significant amount of care. Not sure if that is a valid explanation? I raise this as we have been focused on employee recruitment and retention so that we have a sufficient number of staff to care for our patients when volume surges occur. We have announced several initiatives and are working on a number of additional ones to help with recruitment. We will also be looking at initiatives to continue to improve retention which actually is pretty strong. As most of you are aware, the crisis of finding employees to work is not simply a local issue. It is a statewide as well as a national issue with significant openings in all industries including healthcare where there are not sufficient applicants for those jobs. It does not mean that we cannot improve in our recruitment and retention which remains an important goal for this organization.

Although we appear to be out of the woods in regards to the COVID 19 positive situation, the need to follow proper hand washing protocols remains the gold standard in our industry. This not only helps with preventing the spread of the COVID virus, it also helps in controlling all types of nosocomial infections in our environment. Please continue to do the outstanding job you are doing in regards to hand washing as it reflects well on you and provides our patients and residents with a safe environment.

Thank you again for all you do for Oneida Health and the many patients we serve.

With Sincerest Gratitude,



Gene F. Morreale

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