



October 12, 2021

Dear Fellow Employees,

This morning US District Judge David Hurd issued a preliminary injunction that prevents the State from enforcing the COVID 19 vaccine mandate with respect to a religious exemption. This means covered personnel can continue to seek religious exemption and covered entities can continue to grant them. This injunction will remain in place unless or until there is an appeal reversing the order or a final decision is made in this case. In summary, the motion for preliminary injunction to seek a religious exemption from the COVID 19 vaccine requirement is granted.

With the above in mind, we have approximately 40 staff members who are currently working due to their request for a religious exemption. Based upon the above, this injunction could be overturned at any time and therefore, I still suggest that those individuals reconsider their position and receive the vaccine. Again, Oneida Health and those we serve needs each and every one of you!!

Please be aware of the following:

1. COVID Cases- We continue to see a spike in patients admitted due to COVID. We currently have 12 inpatients today that are here due to COVID complications. We are also seeing a high number of positives in the outpatient arena that are not being admitted at this time and are simply being managed as outpatients. Bottom line, the COVID virus is still a threat to the health and safety of our community members. New York State is one of 8 states in the country that is seeing an increase in COVID cases.
2. PPE- We have a good abundance of PPE for your use while caring for patients. It is imperative that you continue to wear your mask while at work and when in contact with any patients, residents or co-workers. We have seen a number of vaccinated individuals test positive for COVID. Therefore, just because you are vaccinated does not mean that you are not a carrier nor does it mean that you cannot be sickened by the virus. The symptoms of those that are vaccinated and diagnosed have been nowhere near as problematic as the symptoms of those who are unvaccinated and diagnosed with COVID. Therefore, receiving the vaccine is still a good thing.
3. Booster Vaccines- We are discussing with the Madison County Health Department the roll out of the booster vaccination program for those individuals eligible for the booster. We will be providing more information on this soon.
4. Flu Vaccine- It is that time of year again where the flu vaccine will be available to all healthcare workers. You should have seen a flyer announcing the one day flu vaccine administration program on October 19. Please give every consideration to receiving the flu vaccine. This will help you through our very challenging winter months and hopefully keep you well and able to not only care for our patients and residents but also be there for your family and friends.

I will continue to keep you updated on matters related to religious exemptions and COVID. Please feel free to share my correspondence with your co-workers as well as family and friends.

As stated previously, members of our Senior Leadership team are so grateful for all that every member of our organization is doing to ensure that we are here to provide care for our community members who are also our friends and relatives.

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