



April 2, 2020

Dear Community Member,

The Oneida Health Circle of Care continues its 121 year mission of providing quality health care to Madison County and parts of Oneida County. In the earliest stages of the current pandemic, we began collaborating with the Madison County Department of Health to deliver a coordinated approach to the care of the communities we serve. Since that time, we have implemented measures as promulgated by the CDC, the Federal and State Governments. Our overarching goal during this pandemic is to protect our patients, providers and staff from being infected by both the Flu and COVID-19 virus. To date, we have been very successful with our efforts in this regard. Our services are open and available to provide care to you during this crisis.

Our organization was very aggressive early on, even before required to do so, restricting all visitors in our Extended Care Facility. This was due to the continued prevalence of Flu in our region as well as the growth in the number of cases of COVID-19 in New York State. Our Extended Care Facility cares for frail elderly and we acted quickly to protect them from a high mortality infection.

In our many primary care and specialty care practices, we embraced and successfully implemented a **TELEMEDICINE** and phone triage system. We have also screened all visitors to these offices and when patients were identified as being ill, potentially with the virus, we asked them to wait in their cars to be called in to be seen. For all intents and purposes, the waiting rooms are closed to help with the requirement of social distancing.

Our Quick Care Services, located in Oneida and Camden remain operational and have functioned extremely well in meeting the needs of many who were ill but did not require Emergency Department level of care. The providers and staff in this area were already experts at recognizing potential infection as Quick Care had been seeing high numbers of Flu patients, providing them with diagnosis and treatment. Expanding that same high quality care to potential COVID-19 patients happened without incident.

The Oneida Health Acute Care Facility, which houses a multitude of services including Emergency Medicine, Medical and Surgical Units, ICU, Obstetrics, Wound Care, Imaging, Cardiology, Operative Suites, and Diagnostic Laboratory continued to evolve in their preparation for this virus. Visitor restrictions were implemented quickly as was symptom monitoring of all who needed to enter the facility. We had given providers and staff the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), following the guidelines provided to us. We had developed an isolation unit to manage the care of any suspected or positive COVID-19 patients. This allowed us to protect staff and other hospitalized patients from unintended exposure to the virus. This unit will remain operational until the threat is gone.

Our on-campus Oneida Health/Roswell Park Oncology Services continue to provide care to a good number of patients. Cancer Care during this pandemic remains a priority and through significant efforts

of our physicians, clinical staff and support staff, we have maintained a safe environment for our patients. The oncology clinic, infusion center and radiation center are fully operational.

The next several months will continue to challenge this organization. We are focused on securing needed Personal Protective Equipment and utilizing that scarce resource appropriately. Although we are not now performing elective surgery or endoscopy, our physicians and clinical staff are ready for urgent and emergent cases. We continue to deliver babies on a daily basis. Our Emergency Department is staffed and equipped to respond when needed. We are constantly working to ensure that we are here for you when you need us.

We take great pride in all we do. Whether it is cleanliness of our facility, staff preparedness for whatever comes our way, or outstanding technology to diagnose and treat those who choose us for their care. I promise that we will do all we can possibly do to be here when you need us and to ensure the ongoing safety of our providers and staff. I am so grateful to the men and women who are Oneida Health. I cannot think of a better team of exceptional people that I would want to go into this battle with. They are truly amazing!

To our patients and community members, thank you for the trust you have in us. We are in a very difficult battle and our promise to you remains the same. That is, Exceptional Care...Always.

Sincerely,

Gene F. Morreale
President and CEO