

# Recovery Update



Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we begin to see encouraging signs of a slowdown in the rise of positive COVID-19 cases around the organization, data indicates that social distancing along with the adherence to other recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other governing agencies has successfully contributed to flattening the curve.

At this time, COVID-19-related cases represent a smaller segment of our hospital capacity than once expected, though the impact of this virus on our organization and the communities we serve cannot be understated. Numerous operational and clinical changes have been and will continue to be addressed as our system-wide recovery efforts launch.

We remain endlessly grateful for our physicians, nurses, medical staff and employees who have worked the frontlines of care to ensure the discharge of more than 550 COVID-19-positive patients from our hospitals. While our work continues, we'd like to provide the following essential updates:

## **Expansion of Care: Implementing Guidelines to Safely Restart Elective Procedures**

The state's current executive order halting all non-urgent, non-emergency procedures will be lifted as of May 4. As such, **Baptist Health is planning to resume these types of procedures on Wednesday, May 6**; expanding care to patients whose procedures had been cancelled, to those who experienced more recent medical issues and those who are just now seeking care.

Our physician practices continue their operation by seeing patients both virtually and in-office while deliberately expanding scheduling, including medical clearances for surgery. Imaging locations will be expanding capabilities to handle outpatient elective needs — all in tandem with the restart of elective procedures.

As far as surgical and procedural scheduling is concerned, this will take place based on guidance from federal, state and applicable medical societies. Our initial step to recovery will include outpatient surgeries and procedures with same-day discharge scheduled either in our ambulatory surgery centers or hospitals, in accordance with our published recovery surgical scheduling guidelines.

Lastly, in the coming days, our physician business development group will begin contacting surgeons and medical specialists informing them that they can comfortably and confidently proceed with rescheduling their patients. Please continue to visit our [page for clinical guidance](#), for information, including important WINKS and other updates.



# Recovery Update



## Screening and Testing Are Paramount

Since both are critical components of resuming non-emergency procedures, it is essential that Baptist Health has the capability and capacity to continue screening and testing those entering our facilities. The organization screens all patients and employees and will continue to do so as services that have been temporarily suspended resume.

We have both in-house and outside testing capabilities that are deployed depending on the immediacy of testing needs from a clinical and caregiver safety perspective. We presently test all elective surgery patients for their safety and the safety of other patients and caregivers. We also test according to accepted testing guidelines. A taskforce led by Executive Vice President & Chief Medical Officer Jack Ziffer, Ph.D., M.D., will address additional degrees and types of testing that will best serve our patients and staff as services further expand.

## Advancements in Treatment

The infusion of convalescent plasma has emerged as a promising therapy to treat COVID-19 patients who are not responding to standard supportive care. Baptist Health is one of the first healthcare organizations in Florida to use this investigational therapy, which involves infusing antibody-rich plasma from a donor who has recovered from the disease to a matched patient recipient. While not all patients are candidates for this therapy and it is still under investigation, early signs have been promising. Community members who are looking for information about becoming donors should call 833-MYBAPTIST, and they will be routed to the appropriate location for assistance.

Additionally, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorization to Baptist Hospital's Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory at Miami Cancer Institute to perform COVID-19 tests in-house. We were among the first 12 labs to receive this approval nationwide. The Institute is also currently participating in a total of five COVID-19 clinical trials. One trial explores the use of convalescent plasma, which uses plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients to treat those who are ill in the hope that antibodies present in survivors can fight the virus and improve outcomes in infected patients; another finds our physicians researching the use of mesenchymal stem cells, a type of umbilical cord blood cell known for its ability to prevent the severe lung inflammation common in very ill COVID-19 patients (pending FDA approval).

# Recovery Update



## Patient Safety Is Our Top Priority

We know that this is a challenging time and that some of our communities may feel anxious or worried about visiting a healthcare facility. We want to assure our patients that Baptist Health has taken the necessary precautionary actions so that we can continue to confidently serve them and their loved ones safely. From implementing enhanced patient screening measures, such as temperature checks, to socially-distanced waiting rooms and staggered appointments, we are continuously demonstrating that safety is our top priority.

Baptist Health continues to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and appropriate state guidelines to keep our guests and employees safe.

## Update on Personal Travel

Baptist Health strongly recommends the continued suspension of personal travel, for the safety of our employees, patients and the community. Any employee who travels outside of Florida, either by air or ground transportation, will still need to contact Occupational Health at 786-596-2345 for clearance before returning to work at one of our facilities. Those Employees may be subject to up to 14 days of quarantine, during which time, PTO or LOA will need to be used for any days missed from work. Employees who are permitted to return to work will be required to wear a mask at all times and conduct daily temperature checks upon entering the facility.

## Exploring New Modes of Medical Staff Communication

To help foster improved communication and collaboration during this time, Baptist Health is exploring new ways to streamline the organization's communications to and discussions amongst our medical staff and greater clinical community. By delivering critical operational updates in real-time, via physicians' preferred methods — be it text, video chat, email, telephone or any combination thereof — we can best ensure our medical staff stays informed without sacrificing safety or quality.

## Telehealth and Virtual Care

Telehealth, also referred to as virtual care, provides individuals the opportunity to virtually visit with a physician rather than visit his or her medical office in person. Many of our physicians currently see patients using our free app Baptist Health Care On Demand. Individuals can download the app on a smartphone, tablet or desktop computer and request a consultation or screening from the comfort of their own homes, 24/7.

The Baptist Health Care On Demand app has served as a first line of defense for COVID-19 screening for scores of concerned individuals. Visit [BaptistHealth.net/CareOnDemand](https://www.baptisthealth.net/CareOnDemand) to download the app and to learn more about our telehealth capabilities.



# Recovery Update



## COVID-19 Online Resource Center and Social Media Updates

Since the onset of the pandemic, Baptist Health has provided the community a robust, online resource center: [BaptistHealth.net/Coronavirus](https://www.baptisthealth.net/coronavirus). This virtual hub aggregates the latest news and information around our COVID-19 preparation, response and preventive measures. In addition, we've provided access to our news releases, Resource and Salud blog posts featuring our clinical subject matter experts, information related to accessing medically necessary services and details of the precautions we are taking to keep our patients, clinicians and staff safe.

If you or a loved one are interested in receiving the latest news from Baptist Health straight to your inbox, please sign up to receive email updates simply by clicking [here](#).

Social media is a critical means of communication between Baptist Health and the communities we serve. We invite you to follow Baptist Health (BaptistHealth.net) on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: [@BaptistHealthSF](#).

This pandemic has shaped the future of Baptist Health and our world in a far greater way than many of us could have anticipated. Rest assured the dedication of our incredible staff and steadfast vision of our leaders will ensure our success moving forward. Together, we will take lessons learned to continuously improve and evolve, leading South Florida forward with unmatched compassion and care.

Be well, stay safe and thank you for your ongoing support.