

**Subject:** COVID-19 Update – August 27

**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2020 3:24 PM

**From:** Bo Boulenger

**To:** DG-BHSF Everyone; DG-BT Everyone Automated; BRRH Everyone; BRRH-BocaCare All

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The number of COVID-19 cases continues to trend downward throughout our system and across the state, which is great news. In Florida, the positivity rate, which is one of the metrics the state uses to determine re-opening has been under 10 percent for two weeks. It was down to 6.36 percent yesterday. There are several indicators that the community is getting better and the spread is slowing. The transmission rate (Rt) for Florida is less than 1, which is very encouraging. The Rt value indicates the average number of people that one person with COVID-19 is expected to infect. A number higher than one means each infected person is passing the virus to more than one other person.

The total number of patients who are positive and suspected positive in our Med/Surg units and ICUs is down approximately 18 percent from a week ago and 39 percent from two weeks ago. Thankfully, discharges continue to outpace hospital admissions for COVID-19. Across Baptist Health hospitals, we are currently caring for 290 patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are awaiting test results. To date, we have discharged 5,584 patients who were treated for the virus. Although there are less patients with COVID-19 in our ICUs, the critical care units remain very busy and the patients we are caring for are very ill and often remain with us for about 3-4 weeks. I want to give a special thank you to the front line teams in the ICUs who continue to work tirelessly to care for our patients.

Across South Florida, we are beginning to see signs that the virus is weaning and of life returning to our new normal- but as we adapt to life in the age of COVID-19, we have to keep safety top of mind. This week, the mayor of Miami-Dade County announced that restaurants will soon begin to serve customers indoors in a limited capacity; the Dolphins announced limited capacity at the stadium for home games; and some students are returning to campus with added safety and social distancing measures. Masks and social distancing are imperative to our success in resuming normal activities while preventing the spread of the virus. It is up to all of us as a community to do our part and continue to practice these safety measures.

### **Testing Update**

As the volume of patients seeking testing steadily decreases, our turnaround times for receiving results from outside labs is improving. Currently, results become available for patients who have been tested in outpatient settings in approximately 3-5 days. We continue to look for ways to increase our in-house testing capabilities, which produce results within 24 hours. Next week, we will add a new modality- the Abbott 2000 analyzer, which will allow us to run an additional 2,000 tests per week in-house for a total of 5,000 tests per week in-house.

### **Visitor Policies**

Across the organization, entities are adjusting their visitors policies based on their specific circumstances and capabilities so that our patients' loved ones can visit in a safe manner. BOS facilities (including imaging, Urgent Care centers, Urgent Care Express centers, the off-campus emergency department and most ambulatory surgery centers) and physician practices including BHMg, BocaCare and BHPG are allowing one adult visitor per patient unless site-specific circumstances prevent this from occurring. Hospitals are evaluating and adjusting their visitor policies as conditions evolve. The most

updated visitor guidelines can be found here: <https://baptisthealth-coronavirus.com/patients-and-visitors/visitor-guidelines>. All visitors will be screened for the safety of our staff and patients. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, cough or shortness of breath, or anyone who has had close contact with an infected person, or who has a known COVID-19 infection and does not meet the time and symptom criteria to remove precautions, will not be allowed to enter our facilities as a visitor.

When we pause and look back over the last 7 months, we have learned a lot about COVID-19. We have the most experienced, highest-performing team imaginable facing this pandemic. Our work has been driven by careful decision-making, evidence-based strategies, thorough communication among our entities and teams, and exceptional dedication of all of our employees. As we look ahead, I feel confident that we will continue to be prepared and able to adjust as necessary so that as a team we are able to support each other and deliver compassionate care to our patients, families and community.

Thank you for the difference you make every day,  
Bo

### **Bo Boulenger**

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