

**Subject:** COVID-19 Update – August 6

**Sent:** Thursday, August 6, 2020 7:02 PM

**From:** Bo Boulenger

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This week, thankfully, we have continued to see a decrease in the admissions of patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are suspected to be positive across the system. Those numbers are down by approximately 20 percent from a week ago, and our number of discharges continues to increase. This trend is good news, and we are hopeful it will remain on that trajectory. Our ICUs continue to be very busy particularly in Miami-Dade County, yet we anticipate that we will begin to see a decrease in the number of patients in our ICUs as admissions decrease. Working closely with the State of Florida, we have been able to secure additional supplies of Remdesivir to care for our patients. As of today we are caring for 538 patients in our hospitals who are confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, and we have discharged 4,542 patients with COVID-19, which we are very proud of. The trends we are experiencing are consistent community-wide at other hospitals and the percent of residents testing positive is also dropping, which is an encouraging sign that community spread is slowing.

We are cautiously optimistic as we closely follow this downward trend and as we begin to revisit our recovery plan so we can resume caring for all the patients in our community and treat patients with other healthcare needs who are delaying seeking treatment. Our Recovery Task Force is looking at a phased approach to expanding some of the surgical procedures we had paused, and that may vary by the circumstances at each location. Safety continues to be a top priority every step of the way. Just as we have safety measures across our system to protect our patients and staff within our walls, it is equally important for everyone out in the community to wear a mask in public, wash their hands frequently, practice social distancing and avoid group gatherings. Those behaviors are vital to slowing the spread of the virus and to helping with our community's recovery and our own recovery so that we can continue to effectively deliver necessary healthcare to all patients who need us.

### **Staffing Update**

Last week, we welcomed more than 300 contracted nurses, respiratory therapists and clinical partners who have been provided to us by the State of Florida to support our frontline caregivers. We are grateful to the State, which is fully funding the four-week engagement of this rapid response group currently working throughout our facilities in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. The staff is expected to be with us through the end of the month. During that time, we'll be able to evaluate whether an extension may be necessary based on local circumstances. We are grateful to these caregivers who traveled here to support our staff and to help shoulder the work of caring for these patients.

### **Employee Screening Process**

In late August, we will be implementing new technology to help with employee screening efforts. The Recovery Task Force team, along with Occupational Health, is working on building functionality within our wellness platform/app, Virgin Pulse. In preparation for the new process,

please be sure to download the Virgin Pulse app and register your account if you have not done so already. [Click here](#) for instructions. You will receive additional details once the screening tool is ready.

### **Results Notification Update**

Our process for notifying patients by text message about positive and negative COVID-19 test results is going well. We have seen a decrease in the volume of calls to our facilities from patients seeking their test results, and it has helped ease the anxiety of many patients awaiting a response. Across the system, it is important that we continue to capture the right information, especially cellphone number and email, at the point of registration in order to ensure that patients are able to receive their results in a timely manner. Patients who provide their email address may also obtain their results through myBaptistHealth.net, our patient portal.

### **Innovative Care Solutions**

Our telemedicine platform, Baptist Health Care On Demand, continues to be heavily used by the community to access care safely from home. We have provided free Urgent Care visits via this platform to our community during the pandemic. Volumes were approximately 8,000 visits in July 2020, up from 800 visits in July of 2019. Urgent Care visits on Baptist Health Care On Demand will continue to be free through August 31<sup>st</sup> with the code CARE19. We also deployed a very innovative vital sign monitoring system called Masimo in our Miami-Dade County Emergency Departments that allows patients to avoid admission and safely go home with remote monitoring of their condition by our eICU staff. This initiative was funded through philanthropy, and we are grateful to our Baptist Health Foundation donors who made it possible.

On behalf of the Governing Board and fellow leaders, allow me to pass along our profound sense of gratitude and admiration for the dedication to our mission witnessed each day in the unwavering commitment caring for our community. We are answering the call in an exemplary manner, and we are so proud of the amazing, ongoing teamwork that is making it possible to take great care of our community and each other during this unprecedented challenge. It is emotional and stressful for all of us, but clearly so for the front line workers who we so greatly admire. One thing is clear though – every day, our patients and families can count on the Baptist Health family to provide compassionate care in a safe environment where we are all focused on one mission: improving the health and well-being of others. By keeping our mission top of mind, and following infection control practices to protect ourselves and others, we're doing our best and helping our community as a whole.

Thank you for your continued dedication,

**Bo Boulenger**

**Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer**

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