

From: Wendy Bringas <WendyB@baptisthealth.net> **On Behalf Of** Bo Boulenger
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 6:27 PM
To: DG-BHSF Everyone <DG-BHSFEveryone@baptisthealth.net>; DG-BT Everyone Automated <DG-BTEveryoneAutomated@baptisthealth.net>; BRRH Everyone <BRRHEveryone@brrh.com>; BRRH-BocaCare All <BocaCareAll@brrh.com>
Subject: COVID-19 Update - December 10

Dear Baptist Health Family,

Hanukkah begins today at sundown, and though celebrations may look a little different this year, I hope you're able to connect with your loved ones and enjoy this holiday that centers around light and hope.

As we reflect on this year, I believe there has never been a more important time than now to be in healthcare given the impact that we, and our colleagues around the world, are making in the world today. We are providing a meaningful and essential service as we balance our everyday care for our patients and families with our ongoing preparation and adjustments in response to the rise in COVID-19 cases in our community.

We are seeing a continued uptick in the number of patients with COVID-19 throughout our hospitals, combined with the normal increases in volume that we generally see in December. As of today, we are caring for 357 patients with COVID-19, which is an increase of approximately 7 percent over last week. While this is a challenging time for us, we do see light at the end of the tunnel with regards to the vaccine.

Vaccine Update

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is meeting today to review and render a decision on granting Emergency Use Authorization for Pfizer's new COVID-19 vaccine. Prior to this meeting, the FDA reviewed Pfizer's clinical trials and validated the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. This is encouraging news as the vaccine is one of the best tools we have to protect ourselves and those around us from COVID-19.

At Baptist Health, we are prepared to receive the vaccine and begin offering it to our employees on a voluntary basis as soon as it is made available. This process could begin as early as next week. We will deploy the vaccine according to the FDA's Emergency Use Authorization as interpreted by the state of Florida- in phases, by pre-determined groups. Priority will be given to employees and caregivers, including medical staff, who work in areas with the most exposure risk. The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses, administered 21 days apart. We expect that it will take approximately two months to vaccinate our frontline staff with both doses of the vaccine during the first phase of the vaccine rollout. Additional information regarding prioritization will follow soon.

In order to measure our staff's interest in receiving the vaccine, we are conducting a voluntary survey. If you have not already done so, please take a moment to fill it out. [Click here](#) to take the survey. Your participation is important as the results will help our distribution planning efforts across the system.

PPE

As we see the number of patients with COVID-19 increase, Baptist Health has the necessary PPE to keep our staff and our patients safe. Our Supply Chain team has worked tirelessly to ensure that the necessary items are available across our system. As always, please use the proper PPE at all times.

Staying Safe During the Holidays

With the holidays upon us, please take steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces and washing your hands often. Carefully consider your holiday plans in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep your family and friends safe as the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise in our communities. Holiday travel may increase your chance of spreading and getting COVID-19. CDC continues to recommend postponing travel and staying home. If you are considering traveling during the holidays, please check the [CDC's Domestic Travel Guidance](#) and consider testing before and after you travel.

Celebrating through a virtual event or a small gathering with immediate family members in your household will reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Families need to be cautious with gathering with family or friends who do not live in the household, such as a college student returning home for the holidays, those living in different households or those traveling from out of town. If you are attending or hosting a holiday celebration, take the following steps to make the gathering safer:

- Have conversations with host ahead of time to understand expectations for celebrating together.
- Bring your own food, drinks, plates, cups, utensils, etc.
- Properly wear a mask indoors and outdoors.
- Stay home if you are sick or have been near someone who thinks they may have or have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Have a small, outdoor celebration with family and friends who live in your community.
- Provide extra unused masks to your guests and encourage guests to wear masks.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Avoid direct contact with others, including handshakes and hugs.
- Seat guests at least 6 feet apart in small tables when eating.
- Encourage guests to wash their hands frequently or use hand sanitizer.
- Limit guests from touching or interacting with pets.
- Ask guests at increased risk for severe illness to not attend in-person gatherings.
- Ask guests with or exposed to COVID-19 to not attend in-person gatherings.

We are living through a time we will always remember, and as healthcare workers we have the honor and opportunity to provide the compassion, strength and health and wellness expertise our community needs. Today, Baptist Health's efforts in responding to the pandemic and preparing for the COVID-19 vaccine were featured in a news segment on the [Today Show on NBC](#).

Thank you all for keeping your focus on our mission and for making it possible for Baptist Health to provide care to its own employees and medical staff and our community as a whole.

Bo Boulenger

Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

6855 Red Road | Coral Gables, FL 33143

Direct: 786-662-7572 | Main: 786-662-7111

Email: bob@baptisthealth.net



Healthcare that Cares

Connect
BaptistHealthSF

