

Subject: COVID-19 Update - July 16

Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 7:10 PM

From: Bo Boulenger

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We continue to feel the impact of the fast-paced community spread of COVID-19 across South Florida. The number of patients seeking testing and care continues to grow each day, and we are working through the challenges of this urgent need for our services. As of today, there are 793 COVID-positive or suspected COVID-positive patients at our hospitals, with 171 of those in the ICU and our hospitals are implementing their surge plans. While we also continue to care for urgent and emergent non-COVID related cases, we have paused all of our focused efforts around recovery in order to dedicate our attention to the surge at hand.

Thank you for your ongoing flexibility and commitment to our patients and each other as we work through the challenges presented by this ongoing health crisis. While the duration of this current surge is uncertain, our community looks to us most in uncertain times, and we are so appreciative for the enduring dedication of all of our healthcare workers and support teams.

Please see below for this week's updates.

Staffing

To help us with our urgent need, 100 rapid response nurses from outside of Florida have arrived for a multi-week engagement at Baptist Health to assist our frontline caregivers. These experienced nurses will be working mainly on the designated COVID-19 floors. They have been going through orientation and will start on the units tomorrow. In addition, we worked with the state to secure additional staffing for our acute care facilities and they will be providing approximately 300 additional staff including nurses, respiratory therapists and patient care techs in the coming weeks.

PPE

We have sufficient supplies of PPE to keep our patients and employees safe- this includes N95 respirators. With the number of cases continuing to climb, it is imperative that we use these supplies prudently and according to [CDC guidelines](#) in order to maximize this supply. We know, based on the experience of the last four months, that the CDC's guidelines regarding the use of PPE are effective in protecting employees and patients while helping to conserve our supply.

Testing Update

With an increased and sustained need for COVID-19 testing across our area, we are experiencing delays in receiving results from our outside laboratories. On average, the turnaround time for test results from our outpatient settings is approximately 7-10 days. Separately, patients who require outpatient surgery are being tested 7 days prior to their

scheduled procedure. Our in-house labs are also experiencing a strain on capacity, due to a national shortage of testing supplies, and we continue to work on securing additional in-house resources for testing.

Plasma Donations Needed

We continue to urgently seek donations of convalescent plasma (plasma collected from people who have recovered from coronavirus), to treat COVID-19 patients who meet clinical criteria. Antibodies present in recovered patients have lifesaving potential, helping boost a patient's immune system so that they can better fight the virus. Patients with a positive antibody test or those with a positive COVID-19 nasal swab who have not had symptoms for 14 days are eligible to donate. OneBlood is the agency collecting donations. Patients should call OneBlood at [407-858-4939](tel:407-858-4939) or [click here](#) to schedule a donation or for more details.

If a potential donor is identified for a specific patient, that potential donor should make an appointment to donate at OneBlood, and provide OneBlood with the patient's IND number in order to direct the donation to that patient.

Student Update

Baptist Health is committed to ensuring a safe clinical learning environment. During a four-month hiatus, we assessed personal protective equipment, clinical volumes and remote learning alternatives. On July 7, Baptist Health partially resumed Group 1 student clinical rotations, restricting rotations in the emergency departments and ICUs, as well as all rotations at Miami Cancer Institute and Lynn Cancer Institute. Group 1 is made up of the most senior students with the most clinical experience who are nearest to graduation and are scheduled to join our workforce in the coming months. At this time, the resumption of rotations for students in Groups 2 and 3 is indefinitely postponed. We will continue to work closely with clinical operations and our academic partners to assess the clinical learning environment, and further restrictions to current rotations or specific sites may be forthcoming.

New Technology Coming for Employee Screening Process

To ensure a safe environment, it is important that our patients, visitors and employees continue to get screened upon entering our facilities. To help make the process more efficient for employees, we will be implementing new technology, the *Workplace Passport Employee Screening Tool*, which will be built into the Virgin Pulse platform.

In preparation for the new process, please download the Virgin Pulse app and register your account if you have not done so already. [Click here](#) for instructions.

Please call Wellness Advantage at 786-596-2387 for any questions regarding the employee screening tool or process.

Revised COVID-19 Post-Exposure Process

In accordance with recently updated CDC guidelines, Baptist Health/Occupational Health has revised and implemented the COVID-19 Exposure & Work Restrictions Guidelines and the

Return to Work Guidelines. Occupational Health will soon share additional information with all employees.

Please continue to take good care of yourself and others by wearing a mask in public and practicing social distancing. Also, remember to take time for yourself. Renewal during this time of crisis is very important. As healthcare providers, we pick up the pace when we need to, and it is just as necessary to rest and recharge. We are here to support each other and work together for everyone's wellbeing.

Thank you,

Bo Boulenger

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