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Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 5:27 PM

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Subject: COVID-19 Update- November 19

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout the past week, we have continued to see steadily increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases in our entities, with COVID-19-related admissions outpacing discharges on many days. As of today, we are caring for 218 patients who are either positive for the virus or are under investigation. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have discharged 7,491 patients with COVID-19.

There has been an increase in the percentage of people testing positive, and projections show a steady upward climb of COVID-19 cases through January. The rate of transmission in the state is now above 1, which means more than 1 person is being infected by each infected person. We must take this seriously, heed warnings and take time to prepare. While our COVID-19 numbers are presently manageable, it is our collective responsibility to work to prevent the spread of the virus for everyone's health and safety.

As we continue to position ourselves to care for our community, we are also hopeful that recent announcements regarding the high efficacy of the vaccine and new available treatments will help us overcome the virus.

COVID-19 Vaccine:

News continues to be promising around the efficacy and timeliness of the availability of a vaccine. After last week's news from Pfizer that a vaccine in trial was 95 percent effective in protecting against the virus, Moderna this week announced that its vaccine is also more than 94.5 percent effective. We are working with state and local officials to plan for the distribution of the vaccine in the near future. While we don't have a concrete date for distribution at this time, we have the necessary equipment and processes to provide the vaccine on a voluntary basis based on established guidelines, once we receive it.

Monoclonal Antibody Therapy:

Last week, the FDA granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for bamlanivimab, a new therapeutic for early treatment of COVID-19. Baptist Health received an allocation of the drug this week, and we expect to receive additional supply from the state in the coming days. Bamlanivimab is a monoclonal antibody infusion for non-hospitalized, high-risk patients. Monoclonal antibodies mimic the immune system's ability to fight off harmful antigens such as viruses. While patients cannot receive it if on oxygen for COVID-19 or hospitalized in an inpatient or observation status, it can be administered in a hospital environment in an infusion area, outpatient in a bed status, or emergency room outpatient basis. When administered as soon as possible after a positive test, and within 10 days of symptom onset, bamlanivimab may reduce viral load, symptoms and risk of hospitalizations and emergency room visits associated with COVID-19. The initial supply of this drug is limited and is being allocated by the Florida Department of Health.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

We continue to follow the CDC's guidelines for selecting, using and optimizing our supplies of protective devices, including medical grade gloves. We know that these guidelines are effective in protecting employees and patients as they are supported by scientific evidence and national and international standards, test methods and specifications. Our Supply Chain team and Baptist Health's PPE Taskforce continue to ensure we have sufficient supplies of PPE, including medical gloves. It is imperative that we continue to use these protective devices judiciously, and in accordance with the CDC's standard and transmission-based precautions in order to maximize our supply.

Keeping Patients, Staff, and Visitors Safe (within approved visitor guidelines)

As we continue to see an increase in the number of cases, the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into our facilities increases as community transmission becomes more widespread. In accordance with CDC guidelines, it is crucial that we preserve our ability to care for our patients, and maintain a safe environment of care for our staff by following the appropriate mitigations and enhanced safety measures:

- Limit the number of visitors to facilitate social distancing and prevent transmission within our facilities
- COVID-19 Screenings (daily)- so we have the ability of early identification and isolation, if necessary, of all staff, patients, and visitors
- Universal Masking- mask use by all patients, visitors and staff greatly reduces the spread of the virus
- Eye protection- continue to use eye protection for ALL direct patient care activities
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing of patient care areas and frequently touched surfaces
- Adhere to public health mitigations to reduce the risk of transmission while in the community

Remaining Vigilant

As community transmission of COVID-19 increases across our area, we must continue to remain vigilant and take measures to protect ourselves while we are at work and when we are out in the community. We have seen reports of increased exposures at other health systems across the country, mainly due to community spread. Just this week, [Mayo Clinic announced](#) that more than 900 staff members contracted the virus within the last two weeks, with 93 percent of those acquiring the virus in the community. Across Baptist Health, 41 employees have contracted the virus within the last two weeks, with the vast majority of cases being community acquired. We have done a great job of emphasizing safety and keeping our staff safe, and must continue to be vigilant. Over the last two weeks, we have seen a 30 percent increase in the number of employees who have been quarantined. We can't stress enough the importance of donning, wearing and doffing PPE properly, using masks at all times and maintaining proper social distancing. Please continue to use caution in break rooms, by limiting the number of people you share the space with, and always maintaining a safe distance when eating. We all need to continue to be careful at all times in order to be able to continue caring for our community.

Flu Update

About 80 percent of our employees have gotten their flu shot. The deadline to receive this year's mandatory flu shot, Friday, December 4, is two weeks away. If you have not done so, please schedule your flu shot appointment at your earliest opportunity through the [Flu App Center](#). If you received your

flu shot elsewhere, please submit your proof of vaccination through the Flu App Center as soon as possible.

Plantation Opening

We are proud to announce that tomorrow is the official Blessing & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of our new wellness and medical complex in Plantation. At this state-of-the-art facility, patients will enjoy a personal and integrated healthcare experience with access to the unparalleled compassionate care for which Baptist Health is known.

This pandemic has further solidified the importance of expanding access to healthcare. Now, Broward County residents will have convenient access to a new ambulatory surgery center, primary care, endocrinology, specialty services from Miami Cancer Institute, Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute, Miami Neuroscience Institute and Miami Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Institute, and even an on-site pharmacy. Urgent Care and Diagnostic Imaging will also be available at this facility.

We are confident that Plantation residents and the greater Broward community will be happy to have an integrated healthcare experience all in one place and right in their backyards. It is especially important during these difficult times to celebrate the good that is happening in our communities.

In closing, as we head into the week of Thanksgiving, I feel the utmost gratitude for everyone across Baptist Health, especially our direct caregivers, for supporting our mission every day. I am confident that we will continue to do heroic work together by being safe, resilient and kind to one another. Thank you for supporting each other and having a key role in caring for our patients and families and providing compassion and hope to our community.

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