

**Subject:** COVID-19 Update – September 24

**Sent:** Thursday, September 24, 2020 5:07 PM

**From:** Bo Boulenger

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through the various changes and challenges that we have been presented with this year, we have learned to adapt to the situation at hand and help each other and our community. As we work through our day to day in a new environment, with new challenges, we continue to adjust our operations to ensure a safe environment for all patients to receive care. As of today, we are caring for 143 patients who are either positive for COVID-19 or are under investigation. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have discharged 6,331 patients with COVID-19.

Over the last couple of weeks, there has been a steady decrease in COVID-19 cases across the state. While overall there have been great improvements, such as a decrease in the total number of COVID-19 patients in our ICU and Step-Down units, and the number of new admissions of COVID-19 cases remains low, we know that COVID-19 remains a part of our world. As schools reopen or make plans to do so across our area and life steadily becomes more normal, it's important to continue to be smart and safe at work and in the community. Thank you for continuing to wear masks correctly and for continuing to practice social distancing and spreading this very important message to your friends and family. Together, we can continue our road to recovery and health.

#### **Outpatient Testing Update**

All Baptist Health Urgent Care and Urgent Care Express locations are offering rapid antigen tests for COVID-19, as well as PCR tests and antibody tests. Rapid antigen test results are often available in as little as 15 minutes. Appointments are not necessary, however, we encourage people to make a reservation using our [Save My Spot online booking](#). For more information about testing, visit [BaptistHealth.net/Coronavirus](https://www.baptisthealth.net/coronavirus).

#### **Don't Delay Care- Recovery Update**

Recent studies, along with our own data, shows us that patients have delayed care during the pandemic. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that 48% of Americans said that they or a family member has skipped or delayed medical care because of the pandemic, and 11% of them said the person's condition worsened as a result of delaying their care. It is important for our community to get the care they need.

Our Recovery Task Force continues to meet weekly to align protocols and share best practices on how to continue our recovery and safely care for our patients across the system. On the marketing and communications side, much work is being done to show our patients what we're doing to keep them safe through stories of our own physicians, nurses and frontline staff along with our own patients. You may recognize some familiar faces in our new campaign [that honors the incredible team](#) that has [cared for our community](#) through this pandemic and [reminds our patients to not delay care](#).

Please continue to let your associates, families and friends know that we are ready to safely provide the care they need.

### **Flu Season Update**

Baptist Health's Mandatory Flu Vaccination program has begun, and I encourage you to get your flu shot early this year. During this pandemic, it is more important than ever to protect yourself, your family and our patients against getting the flu. Occupational Health will continue to send information to all employees about how to get your required vaccine this year.

### **Baptist Health and Nicklaus Children's Hospital Collaborate to Enhance Patient Care**

Baptist Health has enjoyed a long-standing collaboration with Nicklaus Children's Health System for many years. I'm pleased to announce that we have signed an agreement to expand our collaboration on pediatric care, which will enhance care for both pediatric and adult patients in our community. Under the agreement, Nicklaus Children's Pediatric Specialists (NCPS) physicians will cover the pediatric emergency departments at Baptist Hospital and at Homestead Hospital. The physicians who are currently providing care at these facilities will become employed by NCPS, the medical group practice of Nicklaus Children's Health System, and continue to care for pediatric patients at Baptist Hospital and at Homestead Hospital. Baptist Hospital will also extend an arrangement which has been in place since April to transfer children who require inpatient admission to Nicklaus Children's Hospital for care. This has allowed us to convert 32 pediatric inpatient beds to adult beds and ensure that we are able to respond to our patients' needs today, and in the future.

Baptist Hospital continues to provide other pediatric services including neonatal intensive care (NICU), pediatric oncology services (including inpatient care for pediatric oncology) and pediatric emergency care, among other services. While this is not a merger and both organizations will remain separate entities, as part of the agreement, Nicklaus Children's and Baptist Health will work together for the betterment of the children and families of South Florida.

This is a time of dramatic change in healthcare. The way we operate, the way our community seeks care and some of the ways we deliver care has changed dramatically. What has not changed is our "why." Your steadfast commitment to our mission and teamwork keeps us going and keeps our community healthy.

Thank you,  
Bo

### **Bo Boulenger**

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