

February 2, 2021



Hi Team –

This first week of February marks both a continuation in the decline in COVID cases and the start of Black History Month, which was officially recognized in 1976 by President Gerald Ford who called upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” And we’ll be doing just that and more throughout February! Our Employee Resource Group, *TriHealth Resource Initiative for Black Employees (TRIBE)* and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) teams have created a month filled with educational opportunities and special tributes to honor our nation’s Black historical figures, as well as our own physicians, leaders and team members within TriHealth – read below for more details and links to special features!

COVID Status Update

Hospitalizations in the region and at TriHealth continue to decline gradually providing more evidence that the third and hopefully final wave of COVID infections has likely peaked. And while we continue to monitor the new, more contagious variants of this COVID virus, we remain cautiously optimistic that we are finally trending toward the decline in cases that will signal the end of this last and most severe surge in cases (see latest stats in the sidebar to the right). Because of this encouraging sign, we were able to ease ED visitor restrictions, and now one visitor is allowed to accompany ED patients into the exam room. This will, once again, enable much needed emotional care and support as well as advocacy for patients and their families, which is critical to the healing process. Click [here](#) for more details on the updated policy available on Bridge.

Vaccination Process Update

Public vaccinations continue and this week those over the age of 70 are now eligible to start their vaccination process. However, our federal vaccine allotments continue to be small and unpredictable, and as a result, our progress thus far in vaccinating the most vulnerable populations has been disappointingly slow. To date, we have vaccinated 6,030 patients and community members who met Governor DeWine’s eligibility criteria. Our vaccination and call center teams are doing remarkable work in providing exceptional care and service under challenging circumstances due to limited vaccine allotments and enormous demand, but our community remains so grateful! We will continue working around the clock to both secure more vaccines and to get those doses into the arms of our patients and community members as quickly as availability allows.

Team member vaccinations also continue, with most first doses complete and second doses now well underway. Similar to national reporting, we are now hearing from our team members and patient community that they are experiencing a higher incidence of vaccination side effects (fever, fatigue, nausea, muscle aches, etc.) particularly with the second dose. Thankfully though, these symptoms when they do occur are mild and disappear within a day or two. As importantly, these side effects indicate that the vaccine is working to build the required immunities to fight off COVID. So this expected occurrence should not deter anyone from receiving their second dose. Click [here](#) to read about symptom management to help ease any side effects you may experience.

Some team members have also shared with me and other leaders that side effects from the second dose have sometimes required them to take a sick day. So, in an effort to do the right thing for our team members, we have just made the decision to not treat these absences as an “occurrence” or “unexcused absence”, and are instead allowing

COVID-19 Weekly Update

- **131** COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with **21** on ventilators in the ICU.
- **14.6%** COVID positivity rate overall, with a **21.2%** positivity rate for symptomatic patients tested at TriHealth over past two weeks. **Target positivity rate is under 5%!**
- Please stay **VIGILANT** about practicing COVID Always Behaviors...
 - Wear masks
 - Social distance
 - Stay home when sick
 - Hand Hygiene
 - Gatherings of 10 or less

team members whose vaccine side effects resulted in a missed work day to use PTO or take the day unpaid but WITHOUT an occurrence. If you have further questions about vaccine-related absences, contact the HR Service Center by phone at 513-569-5950 or by email at TriHealthHRBC@TriHealth.com.

New Cutting-Edge Technology Brings New Advances in Patient Care at TriHealth

I'm excited to share that we have another win on our journey to get healthcare right! The latest in imaging technology has arrived at the Thomas Comprehensive Care Center, further elevating our ability to deliver world-class care close to home! We are now using the Biograph Vision PET/CT Scanner, which delivers 60 percent higher spatial resolution than traditional scanners, has an opening that is 24 percent larger than most PET scanners – accommodating patients up to 500 pounds – and includes FlowMotion technology, which provides continuous smooth bed motion. Together, these enhanced capabilities offer more patients greater access to the most precise PET/CT imaging technology available anywhere with a significantly more comfortable scanning experience. As importantly, this advanced imaging technology is an essential tool in our TCI cancer program and will enable us to detect illnesses earlier and more precisely monitor disease progression, which will help ensure we establish the right treatment plan as quickly as possible to deliver the best possible care and clinical outcomes to every patient we serve!

TriHealth Sends Front Line Healthcare Workers to the Super Bowl

The NFL offered thousands of frontline healthcare workers the experience of a lifetime – an all expenses paid trip to the Super Bowl! We are grateful for our ongoing partnership with the NFL and their commitment to COVID education and recognition of healthcare heroes. In addition, Bose Corporation also treated a group of our team members to a special home viewing experience with a Bose home entertainment package to watch the big game! We look forward to sharing the stories and photos of our fifteen Healthcare Heroes Super Bowl Experience winners in next week's Weekly Update!

Black History Month is Off and Running!

As noted above, our TRIBE and DEI teams have collaborated to bring us another meaningful Black History Month filled with education, insights and celebrations! Click [here](#) to view a kick-off message from Jeremiah Kirkland, our acting Chief Diversity Officer, and many other team members and leaders sharing what the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has meant to them. Black History Month offers all of us a time to reflect on the many incredible contributions of notable Black Americans throughout history, and to also acknowledge and better understand the overwhelming struggles they've faced *and continue to face* in their fight for equality, liberty, justice and opportunity that is the constitutional right of ALL Americans.

These struggles make the achievements of prominent Black Americans who have paved the way – and continue to do so – even more impressive and important to recognize. And we'll be doing so all month, starting with Madam C.J. Walker, who was the first U.S. woman to become a self-made millionaire; George Washington Carver, who innovated nearly 300 products from the peanut; Rosa Parks, who sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and helped to galvanize the civil rights movement; and Shirley Chisholm, who was the first African American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and many more. Click [here](#) to read more details on the rich history of these important figures! And look for a full schedule of activities and links to more Black History Month features and content on Bridge later this week.

In closing, I want to once again express my deep thanks and admiration to you for everything you've done to help us get to this point where we can finally see the light at the end of the dark and devastating tunnel this pandemic has brought upon us! Because of you, at every turn, we've set the standard and have been the example in our region for how to get healthcare right, and I know this unwavering commitment of service to our community will continue to guide us in the coming months as we face the last phase of this pandemic together, TriHealth Strong!