

March 2, 2021



Following is a transcript of the Weekly Update video published March 2, 2021 and sent to all TriHealth team members, physicians and leaders.

Hi Team –

I'm using this video format for my Weekly Update today to provide some encouraging news about COVID-19 and our journey to get healthcare right, as well as to share a very personal story with you about the profound impact of our healing ministry and the difference it's making where it counts most – in the quality of care we give and in the quality of life we help restore for every patient and family member we serve.

But first, let me start with a brief update on COVID-19 and our efforts to manage through what we all hope will be the final phase of this pandemic. Today, we remain cautiously optimistic by the continuing decline in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and mortality regionally and here at TriHealth – which is reflected in our latest COVID statistics shown here. Additionally, we continue to safely and successfully vaccinate three to four thousand patients and community members each week, which is limited only by our current vaccine allotment. And we stand ready to expand to as many as 6,000 vaccinations a day once vaccine supplies allow. This will enable TriHealth to vaccinate ALL of our nearly 600,000 patients in the next five to six months!

In response to these encouraging and more “stable” conditions, we are taking a cautious first step to begin to return to a more normal operation, specifically with respect to our patient visitation practices and our meeting and communication schedules. We relaxed our inpatient visitor restrictions to allow two visitors per patient, including OB patients, and are also now allowing one visitor for each ED patient! Please review the updated visitor policies on Bridge for more details.

The TriHealth Command Center is reducing its meeting frequency from three times per week to once a week – which is the same frequency of the Regional Incident Command Center calls with other health systems throughout our area. Additionally, Leadership Meetings and Team Member Town Halls will return to their regular monthly schedule starting in March – and we'll announce the dates and times for these meetings soon.

Again, these first steps towards our pre-pandemic “normal” are made possible by the sharp, but now plateauing, decline in COVID-19 cases over the past six to eight weeks, which has resulted in a slower pace of change, both within and outside of TriHealth. However, with new and more contagious COVID variants on the rise – now seven that we are aware of – we realize that a continued decline in cases is not a guarantee. So if cases do spike again, we will respond immediately by reactivating our Surge Plans, as well as returning to more frequent meeting schedules, just as we have done in the past. This will ensure that decisions are made quickly and correctly, and that team members, physicians, and leaders are fully informed real time and have the opportunity to ask important questions about how we are responding and the roles all of us need to play. Remember, the

COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 51 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 3 on ventilators in the ICU.
- 7.8% COVID positivity rate overall, with a 12.4% 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

key to preventing another wave is to continue to be extra vigilant about practicing our COVID mitigation measures, even if we're vaccinated. And these measures include social distancing, mask wearing, hand hygiene, and avoiding groups of more than 10 people. As CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky said late last week, "We may be done with the virus, but clearly it's not done with us.... So we cannot get comfortable or give into a false sense of security that the worst of this pandemic is behind us." This means, it's up to us to keep this positive trend of declining cases going by continuing to strictly adhere to our COVID ALWAYS Behaviors as ONE Team! Thank you for doing your part and continuing to encourage friends and family members to do the same!

In other news, I'm pleased to report that we've achieved another major win on our journey to get healthcare right for our community! As part of our continuing efforts to provide greater access to a full continuum of world-class care close to home, I'm excited to announce that we officially broke ground last Thursday on the TriHealth Heart Hospital – a hospital in a hospital on the campus of Bethesda North! This state-of-the-art facility will provide best-in-class cardiac care and further strengthen our nationally acclaimed heart program – which is currently ranked among the top 10% of cardiac care programs in the nation, with a 3-star rating from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons – based on mortality, morbidity and clinical outcomes! Look for updates on the progress of our TriHealth Heart Hospital in the coming weeks and months.

In closing, I'd like to share a very personal story that brings to life both the tragedy experienced by far too many families due to this devastating global COVID pandemic, as well as the miraculous role our Healthcare Heroes are playing.... as we "show up" TRIHEALTH STRONG every day for every single patient, in order to deliver unparalleled care and the best clinical outcomes possible in the face of seemingly unending challenges!!!

Back in October, as COVID infections and inpatient hospitalizations were starting to surge, my older brother, Dr. John Clement, a long-time and beloved primary care physician at Bethesda North, contracted COVID in the course of caring for one of his patients. His condition worsened quickly and the day before Halloween, he was admitted to Bethesda North. I will never forget the calls I receive that Friday morning from Dr. Patton, Medical Director for the Bethesda North ED, and Dr. McCardell, System Chief of Critical Care, preparing me for what would be the battle of John's life. His condition was so serious and unstable that he needed to be intubated in the ED within hours of presenting. He was immediately admitted to the MICU and what followed was every family's worst COVID nightmare. John spent the next five weeks in the ICU, eventually being trached and in a medically induced coma, with his condition declining rapidly. He battled a massive case of bilateral COVID pneumonia, along with the full gamut of other COVID complications – infections, cytokine storm, clotting issues.... and the list goes on!!! And while fate did not seem to be on John's side, he was blessed with something much more powerful in his corner – a strong constitution and an extraordinary TriHealth Team of unstoppable healthcare heroes who took care of him as if he was their own brother, father, son, or best friend.

And even though his team of doctors, nurses and other care givers were juggling their own personal and professional daily challenges related to the pandemic, they acted as if their only responsibility was to ensure my brother's full recovery. And ensure his full recovery they did – while at the same time caring for many, many patients just like him!!

Following five weeks in the ICU on a ventilator, and another 37 days recovering and undergoing intensive rehab, he was discharged just over a month ago to continue his physical rehab at home. Throughout his 72-day stay, I spoke almost daily with his nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists, and other care givers and witnessed nothing but kindness, a quiet confidence, and amazing clinical expertise.

Sadly, I know my story is not unique, and many of you have walked this same path with your own family and friends. And tragically, I also know that many have not experienced this same positive outcome, and have experienced the pain of losing loved ones to this devastating virus. My heart goes out to you, and I recognize how fortunate and blessed we are for my brother John's survival and expected full recovery.

Our TriHealth Team – including many of you – saved my brother’s life! It is just that simple.... and I have never been more proud to be a part of an organization or more grateful to its amazing team of doctors, nurses, other care givers and support staff!

I’m beyond thrilled to report that just a few weeks ago, Dr. Clement began a gradual, but determined, return to his medical practice, now seeing five to six patients a day in his office.... once again, allowing him to fulfill his sacred calling to serve and to heal – just like his fellow TriHealth physicians and team members did for him.

As I’ve rounded on all those who took care of John to say thank you and to recognize them for their extraordinary service and caring, many shared with me that they think of John as their “miracle patient.” Well, I think of all of them as his “miracle team”—a team of true Healthcare Heroes! And I know John and every member of my family feels exactly the same way.

As Woody Allen once said, “80 percent of success is showing up,” and boy have we SHOWN UP – BIG TIME – for my brother John, and for hundreds of patients just like him!! And in doing so, we turned every challenge we’ve faced over the past year into an opportunity to shine and to shine – for our patients, for our community, and for each other!! What a meaningful testimony to the power and the resiliency of our extraordinary team!

THANK YOU, from the bottom of my heart, for your willingness to show up – **TriHealth Strong** – through every step of this COVID journey. Because of you, that hopeful light at the end of this dark COVID tunnel is finally in sight! Not only are we seeing a sharp decline in COVID infections and hospitalizations, we are also seeing an organization ready to emerge in a post-COVID world stronger, more resilient, and ready to accelerate our sacred work of getting healthcare right!

It has been the privilege of a lifetime and the most rewarding time of my career to work beside you this past year as we battled this global pandemic together! Thank you for WHO you are and WHAT you do! Because of your heroic dedication and hard work, a future filled with hope, healing, and renewal is now in sight and within our power to create! Let’s stay strong through this remaining battle, so we can ultimately bring an end this once in a century pandemic!!