

January 25, 2022



Hi Team –

What an exciting weekend of football, punctuated by the Bengals' last-second upset victory over the Tennessee Titans! Now on their way to their first AFC Championship game in 33 years, the Bengals' playoff run is energizing our community like never before. So, let's continue to rally behind our Bengals and root them on to another win this weekend. And let's allow the energy and optimism from this "last to first" Bengals'

transformation to carry over to our work of defeating COVID and ultimately putting this global pandemic behind us, once and for all!

### COVID Updates

As new COVID cases and hospitalizations have stabilized and even begun to decline in other areas of the country in recent weeks, we are seeing encouraging signs of a similar leveling off in new infections here in Greater Cincinnati. The latest data for our region indicates a reduction in new COVID cases, which we believe will lead to declining COVID hospitalizations in the coming days. As noted in the COVID sidebar, the rate of increase in new cases and hospitalizations at TriHealth has begun to moderate, a hopeful sign we are at or near the peak of this surge. The R-Factor – or the ratio of new cases to existing cases – and our positivity rate are also declining.

By working together – leaders, team members and physicians – we have been successful in managing the rapid rise in new COVID hospitalizations brought on by this surge, never shutting down and accommodating every patient at their time of greatest need. And this is largely because our surge management plans are working, our amazing team members and physicians have once again stepped up to help, and we are blessed with the best patient-centered, "can do" culture, anywhere! So, for the next few weeks, we expect to continue to operate a number of newly converted semi-private beds and will continue to collaborate with our physicians to selectively defer those elective cases which can safely be delayed. On the staffing side, our clinical and support Helping Hands Program has been instrumental in providing essential new staffing support at the bedside. And our bold incentives, which appropriately reward team members for taking on additional shifts, are making a real difference by providing needed supplemental staffing in our busiest care settings impacted by COVID.

In addition to our successful Surge and Capacity Management work, our Bethesda North leadership team has collaborated with the National Guard, the City of Montgomery and The Health Collaborative to quickly stand up a new community COVID testing center near the Bethesda North campus. Located at Weller Park, this site was activated last Thursday and is now providing needed testing to the entire community. We extend our thanks to the National Guard for their support in operating this testing site, which will provide expanded access to testing for everyone in the region to help curb the spread of COVID.

Today, there is renewed hope that as this Omicron-fueled surge begins to wane, the COVID pandemic will soon shift to a more manageable endemic state, becoming somewhat like how we live with the flu. Evidence continues to prove that vaccines – especially with boosters – remain highly effective in preventing severe COVID illness. The combination of an increasingly vaccinated population and natural immunity from exposure to COVID

### COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 221 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 31 on ventilators in the ICU.
- 33.3% COVID positivity rate in the region, with a 45.4% positivity rate for symptomatic patients tested at TriHealth over past two weeks. Target positivity rate is under 5%!
- R-factor for 14-county region now at 1.14. Hamilton County R-factor now at 1.05. Target R-factor is below 1.0.

will move us closer to herd immunity and a new “endemic” phase of more manageable COVID infections. And a growing number of new, highly effective therapies will soon be more widely available ranging from oral antiviral medications to prevent severe COVID infections to new monoclonal antibodies which help prevent hospitalization in high-risk patients. While we continue to be concerned about new COVID variants that could arise, current and developing technologies should allow us to respond quickly to any new challenge. As Dr. Stephen Blatt, TriHealth Medical Director for Infectious Diseases, shared with me last week, “Although endemic COVID will probably be with us for many years to come, the future is bright, and we should be able to return to a much more normal lifestyle in the near future.”

### School to Work Program Funding Secured

Central to providing the best care to every patient we serve is our ability to appropriately staff our hospitals and practices with the right talent that mirrors the increasingly diverse community. So, two years ago, TriHealth forged an innovative partnership with Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) to create the School to Work Program (STWP). This unique workforce development and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative currently provides 20 CPS junior and senior high school students with real-world healthcare experience, a paycheck and school credit as they rotate through and work beside our own team members in an array of departments at Good Samaritan Hospital. Equally important, the program opens the eyes of young, underrepresented minority students to consider a wide range of career opportunities in the field of healthcare. Initiatives such as the STWP play an important role in creating a “pipeline” to prepare a more diverse talent pool of future healthcare workers who better reflect the rich diversity and differences of those we serve. Learn more about the STWP by [clicking this link](#).



Given the initial success of this program in sparking interest in and pursuit of healthcare careers after graduation, TriHealth and our two sponsors – CommonSpirit and Bethesda Inc. – made the decision to raise funds for an endowment that will support the STWP for years to come. A big shout out to Phil Foster, TriHealth Board Member and CommonSpirit SVP, and Jill Miller, President of Bethesda Inc., for their strong advocacy in securing \$6 million from each sponsor to fund what is now a nearly \$15 million endowment. This secures funding of this program FOREVER and will allow for us to more than double the program’s enrollment size to touch the lives of 40+ students per year and to even offer scholarships to graduating students in pursuit of healthcare careers at area universities and technical colleges.

### Martin Luther King Jr. Day Town Hall Recap

Last Wednesday, our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team led TriHealth’s annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life and legacy. This special livestreamed town hall was a powerful program featuring spoken word and dance performances honoring Dr. King’s mission and teachings. I had the privilege of opening the Town Hall and introducing Tashawna Otabil, Chief Diversity Officer, and the program which celebrated Dr. King’s legacy and many contributions to civil rights while drawing inspiration for our work in advancing a more equitable healthcare culture at TriHealth and our healthcare industry. If you were unable to participate in the livestream, I encourage you to [click this link](#) to view the MLK Town Hall recording.



### Nearly 140 TriHealth Physicians Honored as “Top Doctors for 2022”

Throughout this pandemic, our TriHealth physicians have been among the countless frontline heroes whose

commitment to putting our patients first has been both inspiring and unwavering. So, it is heartening to see their passion for patient care and TriHealth's mission of service validated by their peers across the community once again in this year's Top Doctors awards in [Cincinnati Magazine](#). Nearly 140 TriHealth physicians across 39 different specialties were honored this year. And TriHealth physicians led the region in 10 specialty areas, including Cardiology, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Gynecologic Oncology, Hospital Medicine, Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Otolaryngology, Pediatrics and Vascular Surgery. Thank you to all of our TriHealth physicians for always delivering exceptional care for each and every patient we serve. [Click here](#) to read the digital version of Cincinnati Magazine's 2022 Top Doctors issue.

And another BIG thank you to our team members, leaders and physicians across TriHealth for all you continue to do, day in and day out, in advancing our mission to Get Healthcare Right for those we serve, even and especially in the face of this unprecedented global pandemic. Because of you and your commitment to our patients, our community and one another, we continue to be a model for others – Getting It Right – even as we have faced and overcome every challenge brought on by this two-year pandemic and this current Omicron surge! We are more hopeful today than ever that we are nearing the end of this pandemic with the promise of brighter days soon ahead!