

August 10, 2021

Hi Team –



Last week, we announced first to our team members and physicians in a [special Town Hall livestream](#) and then alongside the leaders of every Greater Cincinnati health system our decision to require COVID vaccination for all team members, physicians, volunteers, and students. In making this decision, we recognized and weighed the fact that there are strong feelings on both sides of this issue. And while we may never all agree on this decision, we are being guided by our TriHealth values as we work through these differences and at the same time keep our patients and those caring for them safe.

You can read below about our upcoming Vaccination Discussion Forums kicking off later this week — just one of many ways we are living our values in this moment by listening to and understanding—and attempting to address—the reservations of some concerned team members.

In the end, as healthcare workers we take an oath “to do no harm.” Becoming vaccinated is an important step we can all take to reduce the risk of transmission of the COVID virus and the severe illness and death that too often follows. Safety—the safety of our patients and our fellow team members—is why we made this difficult decision. And, this decision, that was unanimously endorsed by the medical staff executive committees of both Good Sam and Bethesda North Hospitals last week, will extend the vaccination requirement to all physicians practicing at TriHealth hospitals, whether employed or independent. The safety of our patients and the larger community is why we stood with the region’s other health systems in announcing our separate but similar vaccine requirements, and we are now seeing other healthcare organizations and employers increasingly adopting similar requirements.

#### COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 39 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 2 on ventilators in the ICU.
- 11.0% COVID positivity rate overall, with a 13.6% 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 1.27. Hamilton County R-factor now at 1.19. Target R-factor is below 1.0.

And with the Delta variant fueling the rapid spread of new cases and hospitalizations—now a fourth wave — TriHealth has had to reinstitute our mask wearing policy across ALL locations and is taking steps to return to COVID testing prior to all surgeries and procedures. This fourth wave is most directly threatening unvaccinated populations, but perhaps more troublingly is spreading among those unable to be vaccinated, such as children under 12 where transmission is unfortunately spiking as we approach the start of the school year.

While recent trends of this fourth wave are alarming, I want to reassure you that we do not anticipate another shutdown of elective surgeries, testing and procedures as was mandated during the first COVID wave in the Spring of 2020. We expect COVID hospitalizations to be much lower than previous waves due to growing vaccination rates in our region particularly among the most vulnerable and most likely to be admitted—those over the age of 60. Our system and hospital leaders also continuously monitor inpatient and outpatient volumes in our hospitals and are making adjustments in staffing and bed availability as needed. Many of the lessons learned from previous surges are assisting us managing through this fourth and hopefully final wave.

#### Scheduling Your Vaccination and Applying for Vaccine Exemption

If you have not yet received the vaccine, you can now schedule your appointment by clicking this [link](#). TriHealth Employee Health vaccine clinics will be offering both Pfizer and Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccines at Bethesda

North Outpatient Imaging, Good Samaritan Hospital and McCullough-Hyde Memorial Hospital over the coming weeks. Visit [Bridge](#) for more information on the vaccine, including FAQs and key dates. And if you are interested in the Moderna vaccine, our team can direct you to other providers in the community that are administering that vaccine.

As has been our practice over the years with the flu and other vaccines, exemptions will be considered by a panel of TriHealth physicians and other experts and will be made for documented medical reasons or deeply held religious beliefs. Medical and non-medical waiver forms and instructions for applying for exemptions are available on [Bridge](#). If you apply for and receive an exemption, you will still be required to undergo weekly testing to minimize the risk of transmission to our patients or other healthcare workers. TriHealth will cover the costs associated with this testing for exempted team members.

### **Vaccination Discussion Forum Livestream – Thursday, August 12 at Noon**

We understand that some team members remain concerned and apprehensive about the COVID vaccination. For those of you who may not yet be ready to schedule your vaccination, we will host our first virtual Vaccination Discussion Forum this Thursday, August 12 from 12-1pm livestreamed on [Bridge](#). Many of us who are now vaccinated also had concerns and questions about the vaccines. Hearing and understanding these concerns through constructive dialogue and open, transparent conversation is essential. And with these conversations, we hope to answer your questions and provide important perspectives from others like you who have also struggled with this decision. And hopefully this will help to allay existing concerns so that together we can all continue our journey to get healthcare right in service to our patients and community.

### **Team Member & Physician Engagement & Safety Survey Launches August 16**

We recognize the physical, mental and emotional toll COVID-19 has taken on all of us as healthcare workers—and virtually everyone who has been impacted by this global pandemic. And there is nothing more important now than understanding how it is impacting your TriHealth work experience. To hear your voice and better understand what we need to do differently or better, next week we will launch our 2021 TriHealth Engagement & Safety Survey. The survey will run from August 16-27, and I am asking you to take a few minutes to complete the survey to provide your candid and confidential feedback on how we are doing and where we can improve so that TriHealth can continue to be the place where team members want to work, physicians want to practice, and the community chooses to receive healthcare. Look for more information in next week's Weekly Update and on Bridge. In the meantime, check out the many ways TriHealth has [invested in and supported our people](#) over the past year—arguably one of the most challenging years in our lives and careers.



### **Celebrating a Successful SOAR Week!**

A BIG thank you to all of our team members and leaders for making SOAR Week such a success last week. Not only did we experience record-breaking participation in the variety of daily virtual SOAR Week activities – including last Thursday's LIVE Trivia event, which our SOAR co-chairs Donna Peters and Randy Hammann graciously allowed me to “crash” for a few minutes—our SOAR champions were able to visit and round on team members and physicians in our hospitals, physician practices, ambulatory sites and corporate offices throughout the week! SOAR Week is our annual celebration and recognition of the amazing work underway throughout our system of keeping our patients safe and well served and our team members and physicians engaged through the TriHealth Way of Leading, Serving and Delivering Care, as we work to bring our vision of getting healthcare right to life—better care, better health, better value—one patient at a time.

