

August 24, 2021



Hi Team –

As summer unofficially winds down with students returning to school and Labor Day just around the corner, our focus sadly has once again turned to battling the COVID pandemic with new cases, hospitalizations, and tragically even deaths on the rise in our community and across the country.

COVID Updates

It has been 19 months since the start of this pandemic, and we are experiencing yet another surge in infections, the fourth wave. But this wave is being fueled by the more contagious and more severe Delta variant and it is disproportionately infecting the young and the unvaccinated. The COVID statistics in the sidebar to the right indicate just how fast the virus is spreading, and creating increased demand for hospital and ICU beds and ventilators. Just two months ago, TriHealth had fewer than 10 COVID patients in our hospitals with none on ventilators. Today, regional forecasting models, which proved to be accurate in predicting virus transmission and hospitalizations during previous pandemic waves, are estimating that by early to mid-September demand for COVID hospital and ICU beds within the region could double to approximately 600 COVID inpatients and 170 in the ICU.

COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 66 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 13 on ventilators in the ICU.
- 13.1% COVID positivity rate overall, with a 17.1% 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 1.09. Hamilton County R-factor now at 1.02. Target R-factor is below 1.0.

Unlike the three previous waves, where much of our surge and capacity management work centered on availability of PPE, testing, therapeutics and physical beds, our primary concern today is staffing and our ability to accommodate what could be as many as 120-150 COVID patients in our hospitals as soon as September. In recent weeks, hospitals in our region and across the nation have had to close beds simply because of staff shortages. Fortunately, this is not something TriHealth has had to do, and we are now redoubling our efforts to ensure proper staffing by recruiting new and supporting existing team members as well as reinstating the “Helping Hands” and other innovative staffing initiatives, all as we manage through this fourth and hopefully final wave. So last week, David Cook, Jenny Skinner and I shared during our Town Hall Meeting a series of bold initiatives aimed at supporting our people and financially recognizing the amazing and selfless contributions of our team members throughout the pandemic and beyond.

Investing In and Supporting Our People

Unlike many other hospitals and health systems, TriHealth has never turned a patient away throughout this pandemic – a true testament to the sacrifices you’ve made and the commitment you’ve demonstrated time and again in bringing our mission to life in dedicated service to our patients and community. And so, just as you continue to step up to serve our patients in their time of greatest need, TriHealth’s leadership team recognizes the very real need to “step up” on behalf of our system’s greatest asset – our people – by investing in and supporting you through the challenging and stressful times we are all experiencing in this ongoing crisis. These bold initiatives, in appreciation of all you have done and continue to do for our patients, include:

- Paying a **special COVID SERVE Bonus** which will range from \$500 to \$1,200 to every eligible team member and physician in December, with the actual payment based on years of service and employment status (i.e., full time or part time, with part time being prorated based on worked hours).
- Re-introduction of **Helping Hands and Vaccine Support Programs** and new enhanced staffing incentives to reward team members for their personal sacrifice in stepping up to work additional shifts and hours, all to ensure our patients—COVID and other—receive the exceptional care they deserve even in this fourth wave of the COVID pandemic.
- **Readjusting our staffing resources** to better align with our current work volumes, giving team members the coverage they've asked for to allow for necessary time off to rest and recharge.
- Providing team members with access to **enhanced on-site amenities and "mobile" wellness services**, including meditation classes and chair massages.
- Utilizing the **Team Member Resource Center (TMRC)** to serve as the first point of contact for coordinating the staffing resources necessary to continue providing excellent patient care during this fourth wave through the Helping Hands and Vaccination Center staffing programs. Additionally, the TMRC Resource Navigators will continue to offer a range of support services to our team members who may be experiencing hardships due to this prolonged pandemic including the COVID Emergency Relief Fund, EAP, resilience and wellbeing services, and other resources.
- Offering a **"Special Vaccination Thank You" gift** of 405 Appreciation Station points to all team members and physicians who have received or will receive the COVID-19 vaccination in appreciation of supporting patient safety and doing your part to protect all those we serve.

Vaccination Updates

As healthcare workers, getting vaccinated is one important way we can protect our patients and one another and support our system's Journey to "Zero Harm." If you have not yet done so, please use this [convenient online scheduling](#) tool to set up your vaccination appointment today. You can visit [Bridge](#) for more information, including waiver forms to apply for vaccine exemption, links to the clinical research on vaccine safety and efficacy used to inform our decisions, and much more. Yesterday, the FDA granted Pfizer full approval of its vaccine, and Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are also expected to be fully approved soon. But, if you have questions or concerns about the vaccines, we encourage you to attend an upcoming Vaccine Discussion Forum as we continue our conversation to discuss, understand and help to address team member concerns about the vaccine. Visit [Bridge](#) for a schedule of upcoming events to be held in our hospitals and ambulatory centers this week through September, and be sure to join us as we answer your questions and discuss the facts to help you make an informed vaccination decision.

Last Chance to Take the 2021 TriHealth Engagement & Safety Survey!

Thank you to all of our team members and physicians who have taken the [2021 TriHealth Engagement and Safety Survey](#). The survey closes this Friday, August 27, so if you have not yet had a chance to take the survey, I encourage you to do so and tell us how you are feeling about your TriHealth work experience, how we are doing, and where we can do better. Your candid, confidential feedback will help provide us with valuable insights on how we can continue to work to make TriHealth the best workplace and culture for you and the best place to receive care for our patients!



Go Reds and Go TriHealth!

Nearly 5,000 team members and physicians took advantage of our special “thank you” and attended a Reds game on TriHealth over the past few weeks. And while we couldn’t guarantee a Reds win for each of these 12 games, I hope you enjoyed some well-deserved fun at the ballpark with your loved ones and your TriHealth colleagues. [Click here](#) to view the photos our team members shared with us from their night at the ballpark!

Once again, on behalf of our Senior Leadership Team and our Board, thank you for your sacrifices and hard work over the past 19 months – and beyond – in dedicated service to our patients and community during their time of greatest need!



Complete Stroke Certification in TriHealth Learn by September 1

As a part of our stroke certification requirements from the Joint Commission, *all team members and volunteers are to have a yearly 15 minute [Learn module](#) on the warning signs and symptoms of stroke.* Our patients, family members and the community will benefit from this training because a stroke can happen to a patient in the hospital, a hospital visitor or one of our own family members. Visit [Bridge](#) for more information.

TriHealth Corporate Policy Updates

All TriHealth team members are required to review and understand all Corporate Policy revisions. Click [here](#) to download a summary of Corporate Policy Updates. To view full policies, please access TIPS from the Bridge homepage. If you maintain an aqua TriHealth Corporate Policy binder please discard the previous version of these policies, print the current version of policies from TIPS and insert them in the binder.