

August 31, 2021



Hi Team –

As we head into the Labor Day weekend and the official end of summer, I think most would agree this was not the summer we were expecting when it began on Memorial Day with a sense of optimism that the worst of the COVID pandemic was behind us. We are now in the fourth wave of this pandemic, a wave that is being fueled by the even more contagious and severe Delta variant.

Throughout the third and now fourth waves of this pandemic, I've spoken at length in my Weekly Updates and Team Member Town Halls, as well as at a recent press conference alongside leaders of every Greater Cincinnati health system, about the importance of being vaccinated against COVID-19 to keep our patients and one another safe, and ultimately to bring an end to this pandemic. I have also spoken regularly about our extraordinary team members and physicians who have come together and worked together to face and overcome every challenge in this now 19-month long pandemic. And that is exactly what we are doing again as we manage through this fourth and hopefully final surge in COVID cases.

COVID and Vaccination Update

As evidenced in the COVID statistics sidebar to the right, this fourth wave continues to surge with new cases in the region increasing 22% week-over-week and new cases at TriHealth increasing by 40%! And as children – many of whom are not yet able to be vaccinated – return to school, we are sadly witnessing some of the largest increases of new cases in the 5-to-17-year-old age group.

No matter our role within the system, the work we do every day at TriHealth is founded in and guided by our mission and vision to improve the health of our community by delivering on the Triple Aim Plus One – *better care, better health, and better value, plus an enhanced and safe practice and work environment for our doctors and team members*. And as we continue to embrace population health practices and care models to deliver on this sacred promise, we know that prevention and health promotion – which includes limiting the spread of communicable diseases through safe, proven and effective tools, **such as vaccines** – are central to this work. A few days ago, I received a short note from one of our patients which underscores for me the importance of the sacred promise we make to those we serve:

Dear Mr. Clement,

As an expectant mother nearing the end of a high-risk pregnancy, I wanted to say thank you for the decision to require the COVID-19 vaccine. I do understand that people will have different feelings about it but wanted to take a second to express my deep appreciation and gratitude directly to TriHealth for taking this step and weathering the challenges that are sure to come with it.

COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 76 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 11 on ventilators in the ICU.
- 13.1% COVID positivity rate overall, with a 17.9% 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 1.15. Hamilton County R-factor now at 1.21. Target R-factor is below 1.0.

While I have been vaccinated, I have been increasingly anxious and concerned about my delivery and the risks to my newborn baby. Knowing that the nurses on my newborn son's care team will be vaccinated by then is a major, major relief. It says a lot about TriHealth and its commitment to protect the health and safety of lives too young to currently be vaccinated. Having one less thing to worry about right now is a serious benefit, and I am so very grateful. Thank you, so much."

Sincerely,
NK

So, once again, if you have not yet been vaccinated, I encourage you to [sign up today](#) to schedule your vaccine appointment in the name of patient safety and community health and wellness. And if you continue to have questions or concerns about the COVID vaccines, please visit [Bridge](#) for more information including dates and times for our upcoming [Vaccine Discussion Town Halls](#). Many team members have asked questions or had concerns about the religious and ethical implications of vaccines. Here is a [short video](#) from Vatican News which features Pope Francis that can help to answer some of these team member questions.

Supporting Our People as We Manage Through the Fourth Wave

In some ways, Getting Healthcare Right for our community starts at home. And so, it is incumbent on TriHealth and our leadership team to give you what you need as team members and physicians to be at your best every day in consistently delivering our high-quality, compassionate care and service to our patients, especially in the midst of a global pandemic. With the current COVID surge challenging our capacity and stretching our people which is resulting in extra shifts, longer hours, and unavoidable stress, we have been exploring innovative ways to support your health and wellbeing. That is why I'm excited to share, in addition to all the previous actions we announced recently, we will make a one-time **"PTO (Paid Time Off) Thank You Gift"** to all PTO-eligible team members in recognition of your selflessness and many sacrifices throughout this pandemic, but especially this fourth Delta variant fueled wave. This PTO gift will not only recognize your service throughout this pandemic but also reward your commitment to our TriHealth community based on your years of service. You can expect this PTO gift to be deposited by late October into a special PTO gift bank, separate from your normal PTO bank. As a gift, it will not impact your PTO accrual rates or impact your PTO bank balance maximum. These hours are intended to be used so team members can take the time they need to rest, relax and recharge in response to this prolonged public health crisis allowing each of us to bring our best and to be our best in serving our patients. Additional details about this "PTO Thank You Gift" will be communicated later this week, but here is how it will work based on years of service and FTE status:

- Full-time team members with 10 or more years of TriHealth service will receive 40 PTO hours; 5-9 years of service will receive 36 PTO hours; and less than five years will receive 24 PTO hours.
- Part-time team members with 10 or more years of TriHealth service will receive 24 PTO hours; 5-9 years of service will receive 16 PTO hours; and less than five years will receive 8 PTO hours.

This "PTO Thank You Gift" is the latest in a series of bold actions taken by our leadership team throughout this pandemic to support, thank and recognize our team members and physicians for their heroic and selfless service to our community and patients. As the mounting challenges and stresses of COVID impact each of us here and at home, we have developed these programs and offerings – at TriHealth's not insubstantial expense – in appreciation of your dedicated service and in support of your financial, physical, mental and emotional wellbeing during this ongoing crisis. From last year's Healthcare Heroes Award payment to the new Special COVID SERVE Bonus which will range from \$500 to \$1,200 for every eligible full-time team member to offering 405 Appreciation Station points for all vaccinated team members to enhanced "mobile" wellness services and

the newly announced PTO gift, we are finding meaningful ways to thank you and to recognize and reward your amazing service in bringing our mission to life! And, to directly address current staffing challenges brought on by this fourth wave of infections, we have reintroduced the Helping Hands and Vaccine Support programs with new staffing incentives, readjusted our staffing resources to align with current work volumes, and revamped our Team Member Resource Center to ensure we continue to fully serve our patients and community. We will continue to be creative and innovative in finding ways to support you throughout this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. More detail will be provided on these bold initiatives later this week on Bridge and through upcoming OneHR Communications.

Thank you for all you do to Get Healthcare Right for our patients, our community and our team members and physicians. I hope you enjoy a safe and relaxing Labor Day holiday with your loved ones this coming weekend. And to our team members and physicians who will continue to care for our patients throughout this holiday weekend – a big thank you for your sacrifices and dedicated service this weekend and throughout the year!

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.

Congratulations to our Living Our Values Winners

Congratulations to our most recent Living Our Values (LOV) Award Winners! Thank you to the recipients for consistently demonstrating our TriHealth SERVE Values and inspiring us all to live out the TriHealth Way. We appreciate you! Visit [Bridge](#) to learn more about our LOV winners.