

March 31, 2020

LEADERSHIP VISION



Hi Team –

Apologies, first – It's another long one, so please forgive me. There is a lot of important and timely information to share about our latest COVID-19 response plans. Please take the time to read thoroughly...

As predicted, the inevitable surge in confirmed COVID-19 cases across the US is now here, and we're seeing daily growth in transmission of the virus in our greater Cincinnati community.

READINESS PLANNING: While we hoped this day would never come, we began preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic nearly three months ago with development of a comprehensive readiness plan, which marked the first phase of our response efforts.

MOBILIZATION & MITIGATION: As the spread of COVID-19 expanded to Greater Cincinnati nearly four weeks ago, we began to activate our plans and mobilize for an unprecedented surge in demand for acute and intensive care in our hospitals as follows:

- During the week of March 9, we opened the **COVID-19 Command Center** at Baldwin and began phased rollout and implementation of our plans.
- During the week of March 16, we introduced **mitigation measures to slow the spread of COVID19, conserve critical supplies, and keep our community safe** by:
 - **Stopping all elective procedures and surgeries**, which was later mandated by an executive order from Governor DeWine.
 - **Rapidly changing from in-person/on-site care and work to telehealth and telework** across operations, for both clinical and non-clinical functions.
 - **Instituting Fever Check Stations** at all operational sites.
 - **Creating free-standing COVID-19 assessment and care sites** outside our EDs and TPP locations.
 - **Ordering millions of additional surgical and N95 masks and other PPE** to meet the surge consumption demand expected to be upwards of 10,000 per day.
- Last week, we **adjusted staffing models** to ensure appropriate staffing levels for direct care settings and also **began conserving needed resources**. We **implemented supportive measures for affected team members** through enhanced pay and benefits flexibility and establishment of a \$4 million Emergency Relief Fund for team members, among other measures.
- Today, we delivered our **8-week surge/capacity expansion plan**, developed in collaboration with other area health systems and Governor DeWine's office, in preparation for the influx of COVID19 cases in the region.

SURGE READINESS: While it was uncertain 2 – 3 weeks ago the impact the unprecedented mitigation efforts (closure of schools, restaurants, etc.) would have on the intensity and duration of COVID-19 transmission, it's clear now that those measures, while helpful, have not prevented the rapid influx of local COVID-19 cases. Based on best and latest COVID-19 transmission and demand models developed collaboratively with the State, it's anticipated the surge will occur in our area between mid- to late-April, and will result in as many as **two times the number of current inpatients** and up to **three times the number of critical care patients, including those needing ventilators**. In the coming days and weeks, we will face this surge as prepared and ready as any health system because of the planning that has occurred for all scenarios to adequately care for patients, while

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also keeping front-line team members and physicians safe. However, this work *will not be easy* – and will require every one of us to respond with flexibility and a willingness to do things much differently, for at least the next two months. Here are just a few of the major actions we'll take as part of our surge/capacity expansion plan:

- **Transitioning private inpatient rooms to semi-private** to double capacity at all TriHealth acute care hospitals.
- **Activating all beds not currently in use across the system** for ICU and medical/surgical needs.
- **Transferring PACU and OR beds to ICU in our two flagship hospitals – Good Sam and Bethesda North.**
- **Temporarily reassigning nursing and other clinical and support staff from outpatient to ICU and medical/surgical roles using team-based care models.** TriHealth Chief Nursing Executive, Jenny Skinner, and our hospital CNOs, along with Nursing Directors and Nursing Educators, are working to ready non-acute care nurses to redeploy, as needed, to ICU and medical/surgical roles. To do so, they will adopt a team approach to care and staffing models that will allow nurses with little or no ICU/medical/surgical experience to provide care under the guidance of our most experienced nurses.
- **Redeploying experienced community-based primary care, pulmonary and anesthesia physicians to acute care settings in similar team-based hospitalist and critical care roles.**
- **Modifying TriHealth PPE Supply Chain Strategy.** As Dr. Joseph, Dr. Blatt, and I shared in a [memo](#) to all team members over the weekend, to ensure that all our caregivers and front-line staff are properly protected – and that we have the vital equipment we need to provide critical respiratory care for patients throughout the surge – TriHealth is has ordered more than one million surgical and N95 masks, which we expect to receive shortly. Additionally, we are conserving both surgical masks and N95 respirators by following the CDC guidelines to ensure every team member, physician and patient is safe and properly protected.

We'll share more details as our plans are finalized in the coming days, and your leaders will communicate with you directly about how these plans may impact your area and/or your current roles.

ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS: We will continue to keep you up to date and fully informed on our COVID-19 plans, actions and progress every step of the way. Please continue to check our [COVID Hub on Bridge](#) regularly for the latest changes to guidelines and policies. Below is a reminder of this week's schedule of COVID-19 communications:

- Monday, March 30 – Friday, April 4 – Daily Dr. Joseph daily video updates are emailed and archived on [Bridge](#)
- Tuesday, March 31 @ 12pm – Team Member Town Hall was livestreamed and is now archived on [Facebook](#) and [Bridge](#)
- Tuesday, March 31 – CEO Weekly Update
- Wednesday, April 1 @ 6:15pm – Physician Town Hall livestreamed on [Facebook](#) and [Bridge](#)
- Friday, April 3 – Weekly COVID Update email

THANK YOU for your continued tremendous and, yes, *courageous and compassionate* work to help us prepare for and minimize the spread of COVID-19, while mitigating its impact on our system, our team and our community. Now, our most sacred work begins as we fulfill our mission to safeguard the health of potentially thousands of people in our community who need our care more than ever. The coming weeks and months will challenge us all, and we'll be ready – ONE TEAM, ONE MISSION, ONE GREAT HEALTH SYSTEM – standing STRONG and READY to face whatever comes next!