

September 7, 2021



Hi Team –

I hope you were able to enjoy the nice weather – and the world-class Western & Southern/WEBN fireworks show - with your friends and family over the Labor Day Weekend along with some well-deserved rest and relaxation. And to our team members and physicians who worked during the holiday weekend...a BIG THANK YOU for your dedicated service to our patients and community!

Just as with the change of seasons now underway, our work to Get Healthcare Right and at the same time to navigate the latest challenges of this COVID pandemic continues to advance. In recent years, we have together achieved important milestones in providing better care, better health, and better value for our patients and community while also making essential investments aimed at supporting the financial, emotional and physical wellbeing of our team members and physicians, especially during this prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID Update

While new COVID forecasting models are now predicting a gradual “leveling off” of cases and hospitalizations in the coming weeks, this past week has nonetheless brought the highest number of new COVID infections in our region since the start of this fourth wave. Equally concerning is the fact that the more severe Delta variant—which now accounts for virtually all new infections—is fueling an increased need for ICU beds in our region. At TriHealth, our COVID inpatient census remains relatively stable increasing week over week from 76 to 88, and we are hopeful that new cases will flatten in the coming weeks due in part to increasing community vaccination rates. A big thank you to our team members who are stepping up and helping to cover additional shifts as we work to accommodate every patient in need through what we hope is the worst of this fourth wave!!!

COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 88 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 20 on ventilators in the ICU.
- 12.9% COVID positivity rate overall, with a 16.4% 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 1.20. Hamilton County R-factor now at 1.23. Target R-factor is below 1.0.

Vaccination Rates on the Rise

Since announcing TriHealth’s COVID vaccine requirement in early August, hundreds of our team members and physicians have attended and participated in Vaccination Information Forums. These Forums have been aimed at hearing and understanding the concerns of team members with reservations about the vaccines while answering questions and sharing the most recent evidence about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines. Based on these discussions and our desire to allow adequate time for those unvaccinated team members and physicians to make thoughtful, informed decisions, we announced last week that **October 31, 2021**, would be the effective date for all team members and physicians to be fully vaccinated, unless they otherwise receive a medical or religious exemption or deferment. Medical and religious exemption submissions can be accessed on [Bridge](#), and we are asking that they be submitted by **Friday, September 17, 2021**, so that we have the time to thoughtfully consider and act upon these requests in advance of the October 31 vaccination requirement deadline.

Last week, we also shared updated vaccination guidelines with team members relating to two important topics that were consistently raised and discussed during our Vaccine Information Forums. And these include: 1. how

TriHealth would be addressing those who have developed natural immunity from previous COVID infection; and, 2. what the vaccination options would be for pregnant team members and physicians. Throughout this 19-month pandemic, we have followed the science to inform and guide our decisions around COVID safety, treatment, surge and capacity management, and vaccine protocols and policies. And, therefore, as the science has evolved, so too have our policies and practices, as evidenced by:

- TriHealth will now allow team members who can provide a positive COVID or antibody test demonstrating they previously had COVID-19 to choose to receive just one dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines to boost natural immunity. This will now satisfy our vaccination requirement. Recently reported studies which can be found at this [link](#) show that one dose of the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA vaccine provides protection equal to or greater than the vaccines alone for individuals who have already contracted the virus and developed some natural immunity.
- TriHealth will also allow pregnant team members to request a temporary deferment or delay in becoming fully vaccinated until after the delivery of their child. The OB/GYN physician community continues to strongly recommend pregnant women be vaccinated based on the overwhelming evidence proving their safety and the safety of their newborn. However, we will allow pregnant team members to delay vaccination until after delivery by requesting a deferment. Additional information on the deferment process can be found [here](#).

Over the past four weeks – since announcing our vaccine requirement, conducting a series of Vaccine Information Forums and putting in place rewards for becoming vaccinated – we have seen an encouraging increase in vaccinations throughout TriHealth. Today, we are approaching an overall 75% vaccination rate for all of our team members and nearing 95% compliance for our leaders and physicians. As I have said before, there is no simpler or more practical way to fulfill the oath we take as healthcare workers to “do no harm” — and to achieve our patient safety goal of Zero Avoidable Harm—than to become vaccinated. And, in doing so, we create a safer work environment for ourselves and our colleagues, and we take an important step in bringing an end to this pandemic—and the thousands of lives COVID is needlessly and tragically taking each week.

Throughout the pandemic’s uncharted waters and turbulent tides, you have been nothing short of extraordinary in your dedicated service to our patients and community. To recognize the time you’ve given and the sacrifices you’ve made, and to reward your continued commitment in bringing our mission to life – through COVID and beyond – we are taking bold action in a number of ways to support your physical, mental and financial wellbeing. These steps include incentives ranging from a Thank You gift of 405 Appreciation Station points as a thank you for those who become vaccinated; to a special COVID SERVE Bonus ranging from \$500 to \$1,200 for full time team members (and pro-rated for part time team members) payable in December; to extra PTO to give you time to rest and recharge; to re-introduction of the Helping Hands and Vaccine Support Programs; to adding enhanced on-site amenities and “mobile” wellness services, including meditation classes and chair massages. Click [here](#) for more details about each of these initiatives.

Supporting Team Members & the Community Through the One Campaign

Reflecting back over the past 19 months, I am both deeply grateful for and inspired by the collective and individual acts of courage and selflessness occurring throughout TriHealth in response to what previously would have been an unimaginable, but now real pandemic. When our patients and community turned to TriHealth at their time of greatest need during one of the most difficult periods we’ve faced as an organization and a nation, ***you were there...*** you were there for our patients and those most in need, and you were there for TriHealth and our community!



And your incredible response to support those facing personal hardships extended far beyond providing the best and most compassionate clinical care. Your generous financial support to TriHealth’s One Campaign – our annual unified giving campaign to support our three TriHealth Foundations (Good Samaritan Foundation, Bethesda Foundation, McCullough-Hyde Foundation), United Way and ArtsWave – helped to improve the wellbeing of our

community, while also aiding in efforts to reduce hunger, strengthen our local economy, create educational opportunities and bridge cultural divides for our entire community. And here at “home” your generosity directly helped nearly 350 TriHealth team members during their times of need through the Team Member Emergency Fund.

This year’s One Campaign officially launches today, and I invite you to join me with a gift or pledge to help support our team members and our neighbors throughout the region who most need our support. Recognizing the continued challenges we all still face in this ongoing public health crisis, we will again take a low-key, “no pressure” approach to our One Campaign, just as we did last year. The hallmark of our success and many achievements throughout this pandemic has centered on our unwavering service and support of those in need. Our support of the One Campaign is yet another tangible way we all can assist those in our larger community most in need, and we do this through our community partners and our three TriHealth foundations. Visit [TriHealth.com/One](https://www.trihealth.com/One) to learn how you can make a difference with your donation. Thank you, as always, for Living our Values and for coming together as One Team, TriHealth Strong to improve the health and wellbeing of those most in need!