

July 27, 2021



Hi Team –

It's hard to believe that summer is half over already! Like all of you, I have appreciated getting back to some sense of normalcy this summer by enjoying the warm weather and outdoors, baseball games and cookouts with family and friends... and all that summer brings!!! But that excitement is tempered knowing that as we celebrate our summer pastimes, we have yet to put the COVID pandemic behind us. Our own Dr. Steve Blatt

discussed this sobering reality on CNN's [Don Lemon Tonight](#) show with a national audience last week, noting that COVID cases are again on the rise and it is now a pandemic of the unvaccinated. See Dr. Blatt's interview by clicking [here](#).

COVID Updates

As our summer began just a few short months ago, we had hoped the worst of the pandemic was behind us. Unfortunately, the new Delta variant is spreading rapidly, and we see signs that suggest a 4th surge is on the horizon here locally. Experts are calling this wave the “pandemic of the unvaccinated” because nearly all new cases are among unvaccinated populations, with an increasing number of cases in children. In addition to a nearly 40% increase in new COVID cases in Ohio, we are also seeing hospitalizations inch up at TriHealth, now 24 patients, up from less than 10 just a few weeks ago (see sidebar stats). So, our leadership and infection prevention teams are monitoring these troubling trends and stand ready to activate our surge and capacity management plans, should that become necessary.

In recent days, we have been encouraged by a modest uptick in vaccination rates locally and nationally; however, we are continuing to emphasize the safety and efficacy of life-saving vaccines with our unvaccinated healthcare workers and larger community. And, as we discussed at last week's Town Hall Meeting, we are collaborating with other healthcare organizations across the region and state to evaluate a possible vaccination requirement for healthcare workers—as is the case for the flu and other vaccine-avoidable communicable diseases--as part of our commitment to maintain the safest possible environment for our patients and staff. In the meantime, we are continuing to engage our unvaccinated colleagues in respectful conversations to hear and understand their concerns, answer questions and share important perspectives.

Successful GI Transition

Late last month, we successfully transitioned to our new GI physician service model made up of employed TPP physicians and Cincinnati GI, a highly respected group of eight independent GI physicians who are now partnering with TriHealth. The transition went as expected with no interruption in GI services in our hospitals, physician offices or procedure centers. And most importantly, our patients continued to receive the excellent GI care they have come to expect from TriHealth. In addition, we are seeing strong interest on the part of new GI physicians in joining TriHealth, and we expect to see new providers coming on board in the weeks and months ahead as we continue to build our employed GI group within TPP.

COVID-19 Weekly Update

- 24 COVID-positive patients in TriHealth hospitals with 1 on a ventilator in the ICU.
- 5.9% COVID positivity rate overall, with a 8.5% 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 1.44. Hamilton County R-factor now at 1.54. Target R-factor is below 1.0.

Team Member Town Hall and SOAR Week

Thank you for joining us last week for our July Team Member Town Hall! If you missed it, you can catch the highlights video [here](#) or view the full length video on [Bridge](#). And be sure to mark your calendars for SOAR Week, August 2-6! I encourage you to participate in the many fun activities organized by our SOAR councils, sure to be a fun and engaging way to connect with your fellow team members! Click [here](#) to learn more about everything in store next week.

Throughout this pandemic, you have proven beyond a doubt that our collective commitment to *Get Healthcare Right* for our patients, community and each other will help see us through the turbulence of today. As a result, our organization is stronger and more resilient than ever before, ready to take on this latest battle together as One Team, TriHealth Strong! Thank you for all you continue to do for those we serve, and please try to get some time away with family and friends as we head into the final weeks of summer.