

COVID-19 Health System Updates

May 5, 2020, Tuesday

National Nurses Week officially launches tomorrow. What perfect timing.

To our nurses,

Long before there was such a thing as COVID-19, yours was the most trusted profession in America. In fact, for 18 straight years that has been the case. Even in normal times, I do not have the right words to fully capture what you do each day. That is even more true now in the midst of this pandemic.

Behind your N-95 respirator masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves beat the hearts of the bravest and kindest group of professionals one could possibly imagine.

When patients come through our doors, you are among the first to help them, delivering care with excellence, grace, and compassion. In the sound of your voices, our patients find reassurance and safety. Into your eyes they peer for strength when they need it most. And to your hearts they develop a connection through the fundamental, intrinsically human reality that in their darkest, most desperate moments, you can be trusted with their very lives.

Through your excellence and perseverance, you have saved so many lives. And for those who couldn't be saved, you were there to provide comfort and connection, to them and to their loved ones. I cannot even begin to fathom the toll that has taken.

For all the tragedy that this virus has brought, it has deepened our connections to each other as a community and a system, and given clarity to the important and vital role we all play in overcoming this crisis. And for you, the Mount Sinai nurses, that has meant inspiring not just our Health System, but our city and the world. I know that I speak for myself and the Mount Sinai family when I recognize you as a symbol to the world of the good in all of us.

During this National Nurses Week—and every week—thank you for all you do. Thank you for your service to Mount Sinai and to our city. And thank you for giving hope to all of humanity.

Nursing leaders at each of our sites have planned activities for the week—in some cases, they have already begun—and the Health System will be publicly thanking all of you in a [full-page ad](#) in *The New York Times* tomorrow.

As of yesterday afternoon, we had 808 COVID-19-positive patients in our hospitals. That included 231 patients in our ICUs. We had another 155 inpatients under investigation (PUIs). ICU volumes are at about half of peak.

Update on MTA Service

Last week, I alerted you that starting tomorrow, Wednesday, May 6, the MTA will be discontinuing subway services between 1 am and 5 am to disinfect the subways daily. To support those who rely on transportation during the affected hours, the MTA will be increasing bus service. In cases where the bus does not provide a suitable alternative, employees can request a one-way for-hire vehicle to pick them up from work or take them home. Each essential worker will be eligible for one free for-hire trip per night. There is now a [form online](#) where essential employees can provide their contact information/trip details to get more information on booking a ride. To find out more about the program, please click [here](#). We will continue to provide updates as they become available.

Final Thought

As you know, the World Health Organization has designated 2020 as the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife,” in honor of the 200th birthday of Florence Nightingale. And as we recognize our teams during National Nurses Week, I want to reiterate what a privilege it is to wear this badge alongside you. I know there are so many stories to tell, and so many acts of kindness big and small that happen each and every day. It’s my greatest honor to be your colleague.

Vicki R. LoPachin, MD, MBA
Senior Vice President
Chief Medical Officer
Mount Sinai Health System