

COVID-19 Health System Updates

May 1, 2020, Friday

As we work our way step by step down the COVID-19 mountain it is important that we recognize everyone's contributions to this mission. Never before have our Health System and School been more united in addressing a challenge of this magnitude. As it says on every dollar bill, "E Pluribus Unum"—out of many, one.

Today we celebrate our Physician Assistants.

PAs have general board certification and training in all fields of medicine, which helps make this particular group of professionals extremely versatile in our COVID-19 mission. When it came to restructuring staffing models for the Emergency Department, Medicine, and Critical Care, the PAs have contributed at their very highest potential. PAs were frequently the first ones in for redeployments. They were very quick to sign on and stepped into new roles as early as March 15.

In total, more than 600 PAs have played critical roles in our COVID-19 mission. They have performed brilliantly, and we could not be more honored to have them as colleagues and team members.

Here are some representative comments from our PAs and those who work with them:

"I have worked a few inpatient shifts because our transplant ICU is currently being run by anesthesia as opposed to our regular intensivists. It has been a few years since I've been in an inpatient role but as I'm sure everyone has been telling you, the teamwork and camaraderie is incredible. I was petrified driving up to the hospital that first night, afraid of what I would encounter, but the nurses, anesthesiologists, and other colleagues pitching in were so helpful and it truly felt like everyone was there to help the patients as much as possible. It also reminded me how fantastic it is to be a PA because we are resilient, flexible, and can truly do it all! I'm sure our roles will continue to change as the situation evolves and I'm confident we will all step up to the plate."

"I am so proud of the PAs for being flexible and proactive. Even within the ED, there have been staffing modifications and unprecedented expectations and I am proud of our PAs for stepping up. I am also extremely proud of the off-service PAs. There were orthopedics PAs that were redeployed to the ED, and not only served in the tent, but also

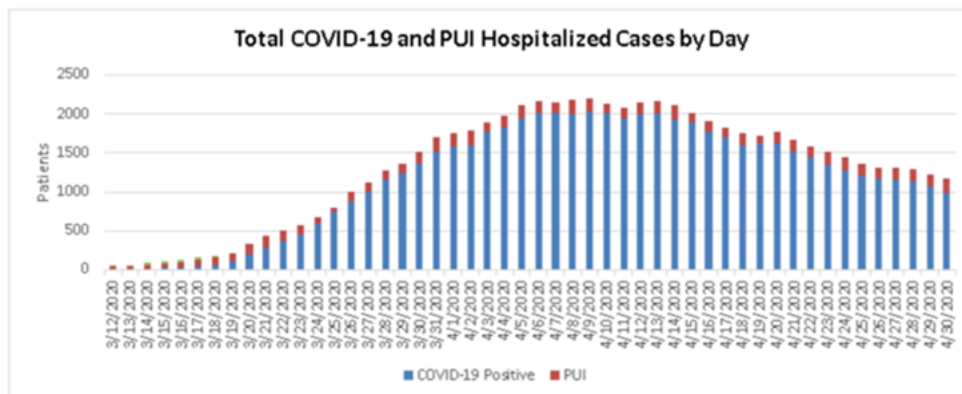
helped nurses draw labs and put in IVs. This week, there were neurosurgery PAs that had been redeployed to the ED and took it upon themselves to help out seeing patients even with non-COVID-19 related symptoms. I am sure that an orthopedics PA putting in IVs and a neurosurgery PA seeing ED patients is not what they do normally, and I applaud them for stepping up to the task and doing a fantastic job.”

“I just wanted to reach out about our PAs during this pandemic. I could not be more proud of their resilience, empathy, courage, and flexibility. We had patients literally all over. Lining hallways, doubling and tripling up in rooms, outside in tents and basically anywhere we could fit. The PAs handled these critical patients and large volumes with ease. They kept up with the treatment changes and developments with COVID-19 and treated patients appropriately. The ED PA staff had to overcome staffing issues due to several of them contracting COVID-19. Everyone was willing to work overtime in order to fill all gaps. We are a family, which is the reason we get up every morning and come to work. You know you are never alone and this is how we are able to make it through these trying times. I could not be more honored to work with such a great group of PAs during this mission.”

We are so grateful to each and every physician assistant in our Mount Sinai family.

As of this afternoon we had 975 COVID-19-positive patients in our hospitals (a 4 percent decrease from the prior day). That included 272 patients in our ICUs. We had another 118 inpatients under investigation (PUIs). That was the first day we were under 1,000 COVID-19-positive inpatients in a very long time.

Here is an update of our inpatient census trend:



Overnight Subway Service Suspended

Beginning Wednesday, May 6, the MTA will be suspending all subway service nightly, from 1 am to 5 am, to enhance disinfection efforts on the city's trains. Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road train cars will also be disinfected daily. The MTA says it will work to fill the transportation gap for essential workers with additional buses, dollar vans, and perhaps free Uber and Lyft vehicles.

With subways not running in those windows, we are evaluating how this change may affect staff and shifts. We'll communicate any additional details or potential scheduling modifications as they arise.

Meet Our COVID-19 Scientists: Creating a 'Pseudo Virus' to Assess Antibodies

As governments, and hospitals, seek to get people safely back to work, high-quality antibody tests will be needed to determine if individuals are protected against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. To help answer that need, a team led by [Benhur Lee, MD](#), has built a pseudo virus—an identical replica of the outer portion of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The pseudo virus, which has now been independently tested by academic and national labs in the United States and abroad, could allow researchers to test the quality of an individual's antibodies and serve as a platform for creating and optimizing potential vaccines. Read more about it [here](#).

Final Thought

We will soon be launching an email address to allow everyone in the Mount Sinai family to send memories and stories, photos and documents, and anything that captures life across our Health System during this pandemic. We hope you will contribute to it once it is up and running. I will keep you posted.

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