

## **COVID-19 Health System Updates**

March 3, 2021, Wednesday

As Dr. Davis and Dr. Charney mentioned last Friday, it has now been a year since we saw our first patient with confirmed COVID-19. And this second surge in COVID-19 cases feels as if it has gone on even longer. Many of you are tired. You've been working long hours, without the opportunity to take much time off, for months. You've given everything you have, and you may feel there's nothing more to give.

I know how hard you've been working, and so do your hospital presidents and other leaders. You've been stretched thin because of the numbers of patients, but also because traveling nurses have been in short supply this time around, since this surge has affected the entire country.

We are all extraordinarily grateful for your efforts, as I've said before, but sometimes gratitude isn't enough. Fortunately, we may soon be able to do something concrete to help.

As our COVID-19 patient numbers continue to decline, we are working with all the hospitals to identify surge units that we can aim to close over the next few weeks. As we do this, our primary goal will be to provide relief to our front-line staff, so as we bring down the surge units, we will redeploy those staff to support others before they return to their pre-surge assignments. We will use this opportunity to provide relief to as many of our front-line staff as possible before we reinstate services and procedures that were suspended during the surge. And to those of you who continue to be redeployed in service of patients and colleagues, there are no words to fully capture our gratitude.

We are trying our best to hire more staff as well, but that takes time, and traveling nurses are still hard to find. But please know that we are working 24/7 on it. You need a break, and a return to normalcy, and we will not stop until we find a way to get there.

As of this morning, we had 449 COVID-19-positive inpatients across the system, 83 of whom were in critical care. The New York State seven-day average test positivity rates stood yesterday at 3.9 percent for New York City, 4.0 percent for Long Island, and 4.1 percent for the Mid-Hudson region.

We resumed vaccinating our most vulnerable patients last week, and I want to salute all the sites—especially Mount Sinai Brooklyn and Mount Sinai Queens—for ramping their vaccination programs back up on very short notice. We have turned on a dime many times before during this vaccination program, but this change was especially large and especially well executed. “Thank you” doesn’t begin to cover it. “We are in awe of what you did” comes a bit closer.

As you may have seen on the news, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine received emergency use authorization on Saturday from the Food and Drug Administration. This vaccine, unlike the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines we have been using, requires only one dose. As a first step, the Mount Sinai Visiting Doctors program will be getting a small amount of this vaccine to take to their patients who are homebound and cannot make it to our vaccination pods.

I have no policy announcements or other items this week, so I will close with this: Last week we continued our Tip of the CAP appreciation events, and many sites incorporated a CAP collage wall, where staff wrote notes of gratitude and appreciation. You can see a recap of the events [here](#).

I am inspired by how you continue to find small moments to celebrate and appreciate each other, despite the challenges you have faced these past few months and continue to face. I certainly have so much to be thankful for—most notably that I get to wear the Mount Sinai badge and work alongside all of you every day.

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