

# COVID-19 Health System Updates

August 5, 2020, Wednesday

Good morning. I hope you, your family, and your home survived Tropical Storm Isaias with no significant damage. I am pleased to let you know that COVID-19 cases continue to be low in our hospitals and our region. But as we've seen recently in New Jersey, it's easy for case counts to start climbing again if all of us don't strictly follow the three main methods of stopping the spread: masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene.

## **Employee Self-Screening**

I want to start today's update by reminding everyone of an important regulatory requirement. All Mount Sinai Health System employees working onsite are required to complete a self-assessment and attest that they are free of COVID-19 symptoms at the beginning of each shift. This includes all of our hospital campuses, the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and corporate sites like 150 East 42nd Street.

Employees can access the screening tool in many ways: via [this link](#), the QR code below, the "COVID Self-Screening" link in the Application launcher, on the intranet, and on the MSHS Internet [COVID-19 Staff Resources section](#).



The form will ask you to screen yourself for a list of COVID-19 symptoms. If you screen positive, you must immediately contact a supervisor to alert them that you will not be reporting to work due to a positive screen, and contact Employee Health Services to receive additional directions—and the return to work policy—by clicking this [link](#) or calling 212-844-1100

## **New Travel Registry**

As you already know, the Mount Sinai [travel policy](#) requires employees to notify their supervisor before any personal travel outside the tristate area and Pennsylvania, and to self-quarantine for 14 days after traveling internationally or to a state designated as a "hot spot" by the New York State Department of Health.

In addition, beginning today, Wednesday, August 5, all Mount Sinai Health System employees who are planning personal or business travel outside New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania must also enter their plans into our new [Mount Sinai Health System Travel Registry](#). This registry is an important tool as we work to keep you, your colleagues, and our patients safe. You must register through this tool as well as notify your manager or supervisor for personal travel and get prior approval for business travel. The tool can be accessed both within and outside the Mount Sinai network.

### **Keep Wearing Your Masks**

Again, I want to thank everyone who is wearing a mask to protect their colleagues and our patients. You can get a mask if you need one from your manager, supervisor, or unit administrator. For employees at 42nd Street, you can also pick up a mask anytime between 8 am and 4 pm, Monday through Friday, at Employee Health Services on the Fourth Floor.

Also, please note that patients who arrive for an appointment with a surgical mask may keep it, but patients arriving with any other type of mask should be offered a surgical mask. This is to ensure the best protection for our staff and other patients. You can refer patients to [this page](#) to learn more about masking.

Finally, remember that you should be wearing a mask while traveling to and from work on public transportation; if you need a mask for your commute, feel free to wear your Mount Sinai-issued mask there as well.

### **Parking Permits Extended**

The New York City Department of Transportation has extended the validity of the parking permits it issued earlier this year to health care professionals working on COVID-19 response. The permits were to have expired last Friday, July 31, but will now be valid until Thursday, December 31. If you have one of these permits, you do not need to do anything; the validity date has been extended, but you will not receive a new document. As a reminder, these permits do not allow parking in “No Standing” zones or bus lanes.

### **Memorial Service Online**

I hope you were able to join the Virtual Memorial Service for members of the Mount Sinai family lost to COVID-19. It was a moving service that reminded us not only of what we have lost, but also the strength and perseverance you have all demonstrated throughout this crisis. If you were unable to attend, a recording of the service is available on the [intranet](#) carousel. Please note that you will need to use your Mount Sinai email address and password to view the video.

## **Reminder: Tell Your Story for the Archives**

As I wrote two weeks ago, we are hoping that staff and students in all departments across the Health System will take advantage of the opportunity to talk with us and record your COVID-19 story for inclusion in the COVID-19 Collection of the Arthur H. Aufses, Jr. MD Archives at Mount Sinai. This could mean talking about your work experience, or something personal that you wanted to share about how this pandemic has impacted you: How did your day at work change? How was your life upended? What was your daily routine like during COVID-19? We can send you some questions to respond to, or you can tell us the story you want to preserve. For more information or to sign up for an interview slot, click [here](#).

## **Meet Our COVID-19 Scientists**

The majority of people with COVID-19—including those with mild infections—mount a robust antibody response that is stable for at least three months, according to a [preprint study](#) led by Ania Wajnberg, MD; Carlos Cordon-Cardo, MD, PhD; and Florian Krammer, PhD. This finding is one more step in answering an important question: Do antibodies to COVID-19 behave like typical antibodies to other diseases, meaning they protect from reinfection? To continue their search for an answer, the team, led by Viviana Simon, MD, PhD, is conducting a study called Protection Associated with Rapid Immunity to SARS-CoV-2 (PARIS), tracking the antibody levels of about 400 people over 12 months. “There’s a lot of evidence that we see a normal immune response,” Dr. Krammer says. “Now that doesn’t mean we will all be protected forever, and it doesn’t mean that it’s impossible to get reinfected, specifically if someone is immune-suppressed. We just don’t have that data yet. We will generate that data as we move forward.” Read more about the research [here](#).

As we enter the sixth month of our COVID-19 experience, one thing remains as true as it was at the beginning: I couldn’t be more proud of you all—from the front-line caregivers who tend to our patients with such skill and compassion, to the scientists working tirelessly on new treatments and discoveries, to the many others who help make everything work. Please remember to take some time for yourself and your family when you can this summer, and to wear your mask, socially distance, and perform hand hygiene regularly. It is still the honor of my life to be your colleague.

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