

Health System News

July 7, 2021

COVID-19 Health System Updates, July 7

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday weekend. This week was supposed to be a joyous week, and for the most part it is, but we are seeing a small uptick in some of the numbers. While we don't yet know much about why we are seeing this, I promised I would always be candid and transparent with you, so here are the latest numbers.

As of this morning, we had 20 COVID-19-positive inpatients across the system, 4 of whom were in critical care. The New York State seven-day average test positivity rates as of yesterday were 0.6 percent for New York City, 0.6 percent for Long Island, and 0.5 percent for the mid-Hudson region. All of these are up somewhat since the previous week.

Our lab scientists and clinical investigators are hard at work trying to understand why this is happening, and I will keep you posted on what they find out. But it seems likely that one cause is the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. We know this variant is super-contagious compared to previous variants. And we know we've been seeing more and more of it in our area.

One of our infectious disease experts, Sean Liu, MD, spoke to *Mount Sinai Today* recently about this variant. You can read his remarks [here](#) and watch a video [here](#). The most important thing to remember is that if you're fully vaccinated, the vaccines will almost certainly protect you against severe disease, hospitalization, or death from this variant. But if you're not vaccinated, you're at increased risk not only of getting sick yourself, but of spreading it to your loved ones who may not be able to fight it off. Unfortunately, we know this variant spreads exceptionally well within households.

So there's no better time than now to [sign up for a vaccine appointment](#) if you haven't received one yet. If this does turn into another surge—and we all hope it

won't—you do not want yourself or your loved ones to be part of it. Trust me on that.

Also, I've been hearing that some of you don't want to get vaccinated right now because you're afraid the vaccine might somehow disrupt your fertility. As it happens, we have one of the world's leading fertility experts right here at Mount Sinai. Alan Copperman, MD, and his colleagues have been looking into this, and they now have the evidence: the COVID-19 vaccines do not affect anyone's fertility, not women's and not men's. But getting COVID-19 when you're pregnant is one of the worst things you can do for yourself or your baby. [Read our interview with Dr. Copperman](#) to learn more. And feel free to share any of these links with anyone you know who still hasn't been vaccinated.

“Hometown Heroes”

While these new numbers are something to keep an eye on, they shouldn't distract us from the fact that today is a very joyous day. It's the day of New York City's "Hometown Heroes" ticker-tape parade to honor the essential workers, both in health care and other industries, whose dedication and compassion got us through one of the darkest times in our history. We are sponsoring a float in the parade and will have employees from many different disciplines and from all of our hospitals attend. I hope you will be able to view the festivities by checking your local news listings; though we could only send a few Mount Sinai employees, the parade honors all of you for everything you have given over the past 16 months.

Commemorating Teamwork and Sacrifice

We will also mark this milestone with the installation of special plaques in the lobbies of our eight hospitals. They will be there to remind our patients, staff, visitors, and anyone else who stops by for years to come of Mount Sinai's immeasurable impact during the pandemic.

And next week, we will also offer every member of the Mount Sinai family the opportunity to receive a Mount Sinai Commemorative COVID-19 Challenge

Coin. These personal keepsakes have become an important tradition, particularly within the crisis response community, symbolizing a catastrophic event and recognizing the teamwork and individual sacrifice needed to overcome such events. In the past, they have been given to front-line workers after historical events of importance, such as 9/11 and the Hurricane Maria relief efforts in Puerto Rico. We have commissioned a coin to specifically recognize the teamwork and partnership our Mount Sinai family showed during our toughest challenge.

Managers at each of our locations will be reaching out separately to share the details of the plaque dedications and coin distributions for each site.

I hope that when you see the plaques or share the challenge coin with loved ones years from now, you'll be able to recall the bravery, commitment, and compassion with which you and so many others fought to restore our community and our livelihood. You have written an important chapter of Mount Sinai's legacy. I couldn't be more proud to have worn the Mount Sinai badge by your side during the crisis, and to celebrate with you this week.