

COVID-19 Health System Updates

September 29, 2020, Tuesday

As you may have read or heard, the New York metropolitan region is currently seeing a modest uptick in COVID-19 cases. In our own Health System hospitals, we currently have about 50 inpatients with COVID-19 infection. This is up from our low of about 25 cases a few weeks ago.

This should not surprise any of us. We have said all along that we would likely see periods of rising caseloads as the pandemic ebbs and flows. These numbers are far smaller than we handled, with all of your help, through March, April, May, and June. At the region's peak, our hospitals had more than 2,000 COVID-19-positive inpatients.

Over the past months, the Health System and the hospitals have developed contingency plans that can be put into operation should the surge continue. We have adequate stocks of personal protective equipment, supplies, and other equipment to meet all of our needs. Our Clinical Command Center is closely monitoring all of our hospitals, and we have developed triggers and plans for cohorting patients and for transfers based on each hospital's capacity if and when needed. At this time, we expect to continue all elective procedures and other work without any disruption. If you have a concern that we haven't addressed, you can always email CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org.

At the hospital and practice level, please continue to observe the tenets of COVID-19 protection. Wear a Mount Sinai-issued mask whenever you are in any of our facilities; perform hand hygiene frequently; maintain six feet of distance from your colleagues to the extent possible; and wear eye protection whenever you are with a patient. And please be especially vigilant in break rooms and when eating. With these steps, we can avoid infecting ourselves and each other, and care for our patients as we know so well how to do.

Updated Visitor Policy

On Thursday, October 1, we will tighten our visitor policy slightly. This is part of our continuing efforts to keep you and our patients as safe as possible.

Starting on Thursday, patients will be allowed only one visitor at a time and a total of two visitors per day. Inpatients will be allowed a total of four hours of visitation per day, while Emergency Department patients will be allowed a total of two hours.

The complete new visitor policy can be found [here](#).

Free Admission to the Guggenheim Museum

The Guggenheim Museum is reopening to the public this week and wants to welcome us for a special socially distanced and masked “early access day” as a thank-you for your hard work during the pandemic. The event will take place this Wednesday, September 30, from 11 am to 6 pm. All Mount Sinai Health System faculty, staff, trainees, and students may sign up for a pair of free, timed entry tickets [here](#). Use your Mount Sinai email address to register, and bring your Mount Sinai Health System ID with you to the museum.

Meet Our COVID-19 Scientists

As the development of COVID-19 vaccines races on, a team led by Avi Ma’ayan, PhD, is doing other vital work—looking for drugs already approved for other diseases that could be repurposed for COVID-19. The team has created the COVID-19 Drug and Gene Set Library, a crowdsourced database and website that consolidates information from labs worldwide that are testing potential COVID-19 drugs *in vitro*. An article on this collaborative effort was recently published in the *Cell Press* journal [Patterns](#). When considering promising drugs, Dr. Ma’ayan points to the example of HIV, a virus for which there is no vaccine, but many drug “cocktails” that keep the viral load very low and prevent new infections. Dr. Ma’ayan says, “If people get sick from COVID-19, and you have drugs that can treat them, you could turn it into a disease that more people can recover from.” Read more about the research [here](#).

Since the beginning, the Mount Sinai Health System and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai have not stopped planning, preparing for, and studying the COVID-19 pandemic to develop better treatment protocols and processes. I am confident that if this uptick continues, we are in a much better place to handle it than we were in the spring. We know more about which treatments work and when to give them, and we know what each of us is capable of. The next few

weeks may bring new challenges, but I know that we'll get through them—
together. Thank you once again for all you do.

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