

# March 16, COVID-19 Health System Updates

March 16 2020, Monday

As COVID-19 continues to have a dramatic impact around the globe and specifically here in New York, it is important that you have the information you need to keep yourselves, your colleagues, and our patients as safe as possible.

First, let me say something that, though we have said it before, needs repeating: Though the battle may be long, and the challenges great, we will beat this and leave a lasting legacy for our Health System, our communities, and the nation. Your resilience and adaptability in the face of such a dynamic and, at times, scary situation is awe-inspiring. I have never been prouder to be your colleague or wear the Mount Sinai badge.

On to the updates:

## **New COVID-19 Employee Resources Website**

All health system COVID-19 Employee Resources can now be found on a new [website](https://mountsinai.org/covid19staffresources), [mountsinai.org/covid19staffresources](https://mountsinai.org/covid19staffresources). This does not require being on the intranet or any password. One click from anywhere, and you are in.

## **More Aggressive Social Distancing Measures**

The city and region have moved to much more aggressive social distancing measures in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 so that health systems are able to manage the influx of newly infected patients. We strongly support these measures. Please help spread the word in your communities that these efforts are vital so that you and your colleagues can keep New York safe.

## **Patient Education and Screening**

Protocols and processes have been revised to increase better protect our patients and our workforce:

**Education:** We emailed hundreds of thousands of past and current patients to educate them on COVID-19, helping members of the public know when and how to seek medical help, should they need it.

**Prevention:** For patients with existing appointments, we've guided any potentially contagious ones to please stay home and contact their physicians or use one of our telemedicine options.

**Telemedicine:** We've expanded telehealth to provide virtual visits before patients ever come into the ED and our other locations. These new systems are specifically designed to answer COVID-19 patient medical questions and concerns, and we have expanded the provider pool to help ensure the process is as seamless as it can be. These options can be found [HERE](#).

## **Elective Surgeries and Procedures**

All non-urgent elective surgical and procedural cases are being canceled in order to free up space, staff, and supplies to assist in the COVID-19 response. Staff formerly working in those areas will be utilized where needed most.

## **Biomedical Tents**

Confirmed cases across New York State continue to rise each day, and Mount Sinai will no doubt see additional patients who test positive. To prepare for and accommodate what could be a significant surge in patient volume, we are building biomedical tents on many of our campuses. These tents can serve multiple functions, including as mass screening areas and even as mass treatment areas.

## **Lab Testing**

The Mount Sinai Hospital Lab has begun testing on-site for COVID-19. This is a critical success in our ability to keep the flow of patients moving in order to accommodate new patients needing us.

In addition, we have opened a specialized ambulatory assessment and testing center downtown, which is designed to direct possible COVID-19 positive patients for testing. We will open additional sites in the coming days. Further, COVID-19 testing is available at all of our hospitals, as well as at the urgent care centers and specific ambulatory sites.

## **Communicating Within Our Community**

We continue to provide updates each day to teams across the system through multiple channels – including all system daily updates from me. Please email us at [CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org](mailto:CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org) with any ideas you have for how we can do better.

Attached you will find some daily headlines. Please feel free to share and post.

## **COVID-19 Policies and Procedures**

We are regularly updating our policies and procedures to meet the demands of this rapidly evolving pandemic. These changes are being implemented in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the NYS and NYC Departments of Health. Updated policy changes will be available at the new [COVID-19 Employee Resources website](#).

In conclusion, I want to say again that I am proud to be your colleague and at your service. If there are any questions on the steps we are taking, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact us at [CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org](mailto:CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org).

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