

COVID-19 Health System Updates

April 4, 2020 Saturday

Amidst the suffering and loss of this terrible pandemic, we are seeing many patients recover and become well enough to get discharged from our hospitals—because of you. And for those we can't save, we will ease their suffering and do what we can for them and their loved ones. This is how we will heal the world: one precious life at a time.

[The New York Times](#) this week featured some of those who work around the clock to “heal the healers”—that is, our chaplains. The paper spotlighted the spiritual and emotional support our hospital chaplains provide us and our patients as we navigate these uncharted waters. They are important members of our Mount Sinai family and we are grateful to them.

As of yesterday afternoon, we had 1,787 COVID-19 positive patients in our hospitals. That included 330 patients in our ICUs. We had another 114 inpatients under investigation (PUIs).

Documentation Relief

To reduce the tremendous burdens on you, we have been working on options for temporary documentation relief during this COVID-19 emergency crisis. We have approved and moved into production the streamlining of Nursing Assessments and Care Plans in the emergency departments and inpatient units, as well as restraint documentation. In addition, the documentation elements associated with the Sepsis Program have been temporarily suspended. We are looking for other documentation relief options and will move those forward as rapidly as possible.

COVID-19 Testing of Symptomatic Employees

Starting on Tuesday, April 7, if you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, we would like to test you for this viral infection using the PCR test with a nasopharyngeal swab within a few days of the onset of your symptoms. This will provide guidance to you and to Employee Health Services regarding your clinical status and return to work. If you were symptomatic prior to April 7, we would like to test you for COVID-19 infection using the serum antibody test. This will provide guidance to you on whether you did have COVID-19 infection as well as whether you are a candidate to provide a plasma donation to help others. Donation would of course be voluntary. On Monday I will give you an update on this plan and we will post easy-to-follow instructions on the [employee resources website](#).

Palliative Care at Home

We have launched Mount Sinai Palliative Care at Home, a new program for seriously ill patients with COVID-19 who wish to be at home focusing on comfort and quality of life. The program will enroll patients from the hospital and the ED, and those who are already at home. Palliative care specialists provide care through video and telephone visits 24/7, and medications are delivered to patients' homes to help with symptom control. Referrals for patients who live anywhere in the five boroughs are accepted by calling 212-241-2496.

Additional Mental Health Resources

In addition to all the mental health resources that we have previously shared with you, and that are up on the [employee resources website](#), our Department of Psychiatry has been working to have psychiatrists and other mental health providers on-site and available to you at all our hospitals. They will be rounding and offering support and also will be available for one-on-one counseling sessions. I sincerely hope that you will accept their offers of help. These types of interventions are proven to make a difference in our own well-being and resilience in the face of all that we are dealing with. We can all use the help.

Where to Send Your Ideas and Questions

As always, if you have questions or suggestions, you can get them to us at CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org.

Final Thoughts

Today I leave you with a quote from the author Doris Lessing. It feels right for this moment.

“Whatever you’re meant to do, do it now. The conditions are always impossible.”

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