

COVID-19 Health System Updates

April 9 2020, Thursday

If you haven't yet read the note that Dr. Davis and Dr. Charney sent yesterday about this holiday season, I hope you will. It so eloquently captures the complicated mix of feelings that many of us are experiencing at this time of year and in the midst of this pandemic. There is no road map for this journey we are on. The dawn of each new day brings us new challenges, new insights, and new emotions. The battle between hope and fear rages in each of us.

But hope is gaining a bit of an upper hand. Social distancing efforts are working, our inpatient volumes have stabilized, and on one single day this week, 167 COVID-19 patients were discharged from our hospitals. That is the most ever for one day and it brings our total number of COVID-19 patients discharged to 1,635. We are healing the world—one precious life at a time.

And yet, there is still so much loss. How do we process it all and find the strength to keep moving forward? Some of our hospitals have instituted a formal pause each time a life is lost. One of our chief nursing officers describes it:

Over the last few weeks, COVID-19 has taken the lives of a number of patients, family members, and friends. As we continue to save as many lives as we can, it is important to take time to address the traumatic stress response that comes as a result of such great loss. "The Pause" was created by trauma nurse Jonathan Bartels, RN, in 2009 to provide a brief moment to acknowledge our collective grief. It may be worthwhile for us to join together and take a 45-second moment of silence not only to recognize the loss of a human life, but also to honor our own efforts as well. For more information on the history of this moment, click [here](#).

The Pause

"Let us take a moment to pause and honor (patient's name or this person). He/she was someone who loved and was loved; was someone's family member and friend. In our own way and in silence let us take a moment to honor (patient's name). Let us also honor and recognize the care provided by our team."

As of yesterday afternoon, we had 1,983 COVID-19 positive patients in our hospitals. That included 447 patients in our ICUs. We had another 174 inpatients under investigation (PUIs).

Mental Health Crisis Teams

Our own departments of psychiatry and social work have created new [Mental Health Crisis and Support Teams](#) that are just a phone call away and are available around the clock. Their only purpose is to support you. Examples of what they can help with include grief, anger, anxiety, profound sadness, depression, fear, feelings of isolation or abandonment, and insomnia. They are here for you no matter the issue.

Well-being and Psychosocial Resource Navigation Hotline

There is also a new one-stop-shopping phone line to help you find whatever you need among all the well-being and psychosocial health resources available to you within the Mount Sinai community. Think of it like your Siri or Alexa for all the information that is posted on the COVID-19 [Employee Resources Website](#), except with real human beings on the other end of the phone. The number is (929) 357-7626, and I recommend that you put it in your contacts so that it is easily accessible to you when you need it. It is staffed from 7 am to 8 pm every day, including weekends.

Final Thought

I received this beautiful note from a colleague of ours named Louella Rudon and wanted to share it with you:

“As a young girl growing up in the Philippines, I used to read a famous Filipino folktale about a mango tree and bamboo tree that I see now so aptly suits our health care workers, first responders, and essential workers. It was titled: ‘Pliant like the Bamboo’. The mango tree was very sturdy and looked very strong as compared to the bamboo tree. But when very strong winds came, the mango tree went down, roots up. The bamboo did not.

The bamboo was pliant, so it swayed and bent as the wind blew, but it did not break. The same is true of our health care workers, first responders, and essential workers. We can withstand the very strong winds like the bamboo, and we will not break. Eventually the storm will pass and there will be sunshine again.

I could not agree more.
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