

COVID-19 Health System Updates

April 24, 2020, Friday

Last night marked the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, and I want to acknowledge all of you who are celebrating. Normally during this time, many of you would be breaking fast with family and friends but this year, instead, are separated from your loved ones as you continue to give so much to this humanitarian mission. Now more than ever, may Allah bring you peace and happiness this Ramadan.

As of yesterday afternoon, we had 1,345 COVID-19 positive patients in our hospitals (about a 5 percent drop from the day before). That included 366 patients in our ICUs. We had another 145 inpatients under investigation (PUIs).

Meet Our Covid-19 Scientists: Antibody Success

While many members of our Mount Sinai family are donning and doffing personal protective equipment and directly caring for patients suffering with COVID-19 infection, there are also many others who are engaged in vital COVID-19 scientific discovery and innovation. From diagnostic testing, vaccine development, and epidemiologic insights, to the development and rapid implementation of therapeutics, Mount Sinai is leading the way.

The heart and soul of Mount Sinai is this combination of world-class, compassionate care coupled with real-world science and innovation to eliminate the causes and impacts of disease.

Today I want to introduce you to the team that developed, validated, and launched a blood test for COVID-19 antibodies that received the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's emergency use authorization. You can read all about them [here](#). Early development of the assay enabled Mount Sinai to become the first health system in the nation to undertake an antibody therapy program that transfers the antibody-rich plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients into those who are critically ill. Mount Sinai has shared the "toolkit" needed to set up the test with more than 200 research labs around the world.

COVID-19 and Racial Disparities

We have read, heard, and seen that COVID-19 is taking an outsized toll on African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos. Thanks to extensive work led by our Office for Diversity and Inclusion to advance our data collection on race and ethnicity, we are well positioned to contribute to the understanding of the causes of these disparate outcomes and to solutions to mitigate them. You will hear more about our efforts soon.

More Stories of Strength

This week's [Stories of Strength](#) are posted. They include cardiologist Barry Love, who made a house call to reset a patient's home defibrillator, and many other acts of kindness, heroism, and generosity. I hope you will visit this site.

Three Cheers for Our Laboratory Colleagues

I want to acknowledge the American Society of Clinical Pathology's Lab Week 2020—an annual celebration of laboratory specialists who are critical to health care and patient advocacy. On behalf of the entire Health System, I want to say thank you to all our laboratory colleagues. I hope you know how much we love you and how grateful we are for your contributions—and even more so in this COVID-19 mission.

Final Thought

Alex Greenberg, a member of our Mount Sinai family, shared with me a poem he wrote, and he gave me permission to share it with you.

He wrote, "I hope you like this poem. I think it captures the moment."

I certainly do, and I think you will too.

40 Days

In the daytime amidst this
Unusual quiet, only ambulances wail,
All day long the sirens pierce,
The only sound out there.
In the morning, we can hear birds
Clearly chirping, in the
Silence of the great city.
At 7 pm every night the city comes alive.
Rousing cheers for the doctors and nurses,
Ambulance drivers, paramedics, all of
The saviors fighting this deadly peril.
A release from the daily quarantine,
People not used to being cooped up
The relentless cabin fever, but at 7 pm

People connect with each other, a signal
That so many are still alive and well
Waiting for that daybreak when we can
Leave home for school or work, or
Just a walk to the store or the park.
The day will come and be greeted
With that deep breath of relief, the
Return to a new normal,
No more handshakes,
No quick hugs or back slaps,
Just head nods, elbow bumps,
Perhaps there will be more
Hellos and how are you's.
We can then stop our 7 pm cheers,
The doctors and nurses can vacation,
If lucky we will still hear the birds
As Noah did after he sailed in the ark,
40 days and nights,
Like the Venetians in the Black Plague
Quaranta, the 40 days, became
Our quarantine as well.

- Alex M. Greenberg, MD

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