

COVID-19 Health System Updates

June 24, 2020, Wednesday

This Monday was a major milestone for our region, as we entered Phase 2 of our reopening. Only a few short months ago, imagining a time when we would be able to shop in retail stores, enjoy a meal outside, or even go back to our offices felt impossible.

And so far, all indicators are still trending in the right direction, a sign that our reopening protocols have been done thoroughly and thoughtfully. These days, across the State of New York, only about one percent of the tests for COVID-19 infection are coming back positive.

Despite this good news here at home, it's been difficult to see infection rates climb in states across the country. These trends are concerning, and a reminder that while things here are normalizing for us, this pandemic is far from over. Now more than ever, vigilance is key—mask wearing, hand hygiene, and social distancing will all be essential in the weeks and months ahead to keep our region moving in the right direction.

As of yesterday afternoon, we had 52 COVID-19-positive patients in our hospitals. That included 15 patients in our ICUs. We had another 124 inpatients under investigation (PUIs).

Ambulatory Care Town Hall

We are holding a Town Hall today, June 24, from 4 - 5 pm, that will focus on Ambulatory Care but is open to all staff and faculty. We are looking forward to this virtual gathering, where we will address the System's efforts to ensure a safe transition back to full operations while maintaining the safety of staff and patients as our top priority. As part of that discussion, we will share an update on our progress, employee travel policies, and paid time off.

The gathering will be live-streamed via Zoom. You can tune in [here](#) (password 904192) or by dialing in to 1-929-436-2866 (Webinar ID: 958 8676 4683). If possible, please use the [webinar link](#) as phone lines may overload. A Q & A session will follow. While you can submit inquiries during the Town Hall using the Q & A feature on Zoom, we encourage you to submit questions in advance to meiyun.liu@mountsinai.org.

MTA Updates

As the city enters Phase 2 of reopening, the MTA is continuing to slowly scale up its service. The MTA is requiring masks for all riders and disinfecting the trains regularly to keep everyone safe. Service from 1 am - 5 am is still suspended, and bus service is still available free during this time. Please carry your staff ID with you when commuting and

expect and prepare for delays. You can find the most recent information from the MTA [here](#).

Safety Hub

As you know, last month we launched a [Safety Hub](#) on our website, where we document all the things we are doing to keep our patients and staff safe. We know that patients have concerns about exposure to COVID-19, and that those concerns are causing some to put off needed care. Through the Safety Hub, we are working to address and allay those fears. As always, please feel free to email safetyhub@mountsinai.org, where you can send specific questions that you or your patients might have and receive a quick answer.

Likewise, each of us can play an important role in helping to get the message out that it is safe to come for care to our hospitals and ambulatory sites. There are so many people in our communities who are delaying needed care right now. The public trusts you and needs your reassurance.

Meet Our COVID Scientists

Since March 8, when Mount Sinai West hospitalized its first patient with COVID-19, we have cared for more than 8,000 people with the disease on our inpatient units. And in both patient care and research, Mount Sinai has been the epicenter of the epicenter. Among many insights that our scientists have gained is this: COVID-19 is not just a respiratory illness but a disease of the blood vessels that can cause blood clots throughout the body, leading to the failure of multiple organs. Carlos Cordon-Cardo, MD, PhD, and Mary Fowkes, MD, PhD, recently published a preprint [study](#) based on patient autopsies. Their team found blood clots in major organs, including the lungs, heart, and central nervous system, confirming and explaining what we have seen in our hospitals—that patients with diabetes and heart disease were especially vulnerable to COVID-19. “If you have pre-existing damage to blood vessels you would be at greater risk,” Dr. Fowkes says.

The last three months of this crisis have illustrated just how well our clinical enterprise is able to collaborate with our research enterprise at the School of Medicine to advance care. As David Reich, MD, says, “We were able to do things together that we never would have been able to do separately. And because of that, we were able to change the course of therapeutics for this disease.” I hope you’ll read more about this incredible work [here](#). And I hope you’ll all take a moment to reflect on the truly remarkable progress we’ve made as a community so far.

Your Questions and Concerns

As a reminder, our COVID-19 Employee Resources website is [here](#). And you can always email CovidQuestions@mountsinai.org if you have any other questions or suggestions for us.

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