

Message from Vinson M. Yates, President, OhioHealth Mansfield & Shelby Hospitals

April 10, 2020

Dear Community Partner,

As I begin to write this message to you, the word “connections” is in my mind. The topics I plan to cover in this note are reminders of the connections I am feeling. Connections with our community, local businesses and agencies, our patients and their families, our staff, our providers, our suppliers, our healthcare system, other healthcare providers, and our local and state leaders. It’s times like this that you realize the connections you make before a crisis occurs makes for easier navigation during the most challenging times.

SURGE PLANNING: We have been working night and day during this unprecedented situation to develop plans to ensure OhioHealth Mansfield and Shelby Hospitals are ready for an influx of patients. We’ve been working locally and collaborating with our colleagues within the OhioHealth system to develop operational and staffing plans that can be quickly implemented when we experience a surge in the need for inpatient beds in our community. I’d like to take a few minutes to share our plan with you.

In the event of a surge, Mansfield Hospital has been designated to care for critical care patients and Shelby Hospital has been designated to care for non-critical care patients. We have developed a Capacity Surge Plan specific to how both hospitals will support this strategy. The plan lays out details of how we will adjust our spaces, unit-by-unit, through three levels of surge capacities.

OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital, OhioHealth Grant Medical Center, OhioHealth Doctors Hospital, and OhioHealth Marion General Hospital will also help support the care for all critical care patients in the system. These sites are equipped to support 24/7 intensivist coverage and have spaces that are scalable to meet the needs of critical care patients, while continuing to treat non-critical care patients through a surge.

You may have questions about how our surge plans are connected to the possible use of the Greater Columbus Convention Center. I’d like to take a few minutes to explain this. The Convention Center will only be used when collectively, when the hospitals in Columbus (from OhioHealth, OSU Wexner Medical Center, and Mt. Carmel) can no longer accommodate the needs of their patients. That’s when the plan to activate the Convention Center will begin. Within 72 hours, the convention center can be ready to accept patients. Each hospital system in central Ohio will manage its own area within the facility, staffed by its own associates and providers, and caring for its own COVID-19 patients. These patients will be patients who no longer need intensive inpatient care, yet aren’t quite ready to be sent home. How are we supporting this effort? We have nurses who have volunteered to serve there, if necessary.

How do we then dock into this plan? Our plan is and has always been for us to keep care local for patients who live in Richland, Ashland, and Crawford counties and surrounding areas. Established referral patterns will apply for COVID-19 patients who need care beyond that which is available at Mansfield Hospital, but the intent is to never transfer patients directly from Mansfield Hospital to the Columbus Convention Center for their care.

REDEPLOYMENT: I'd also like to take a few minutes to share how we are adjusting operations and redeploying staff and providers in response to the COVID-19 related changes we've made. As you know, we canceled non-emergency procedures, surgeries, office visits, and screenings as the crisis began to conserve supplies, such as blood and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This has resulted in changes in hours of operation in some areas of the hospitals and in our practices. Our goal has been to keep our associates whole in terms of hours worked and pay. It has allowed many members of our team to work in new areas of the hospital and learn new skills. Associates may be redeployed to a part of the organization that is not specific to their area of expertise; however, we will not put an associate in an area in which they are not qualified. The same goes for our physicians and advanced practice providers. We've had many people raise their hands and say, "I want to help wherever I'm needed." As I walk the halls of the hospitals and see members of our Valet team helping clean door knobs or banisters, or administrative professionals taking temperatures at our entrances, I see the power of *WE* every day. We are shifting resources to the right areas to ensure we can live up to our commitment to care for our community. I can't tell you how proud I am of our entire team for their "all hands on deck attitude."

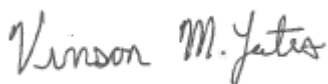
COMMUNITY COLLABORATION: Locally, our team has been working collaboratively with area public health departments, other community hospitals, Emergency Management Agencies, and other agencies to plan for the surge we anticipate. The collaboration has been outstanding, with all of us focused on doing what's right for our community, our patients, and our caregivers.

All of these activities work together and build off each other, so we are prepared for all the possible "what ifs" over the next several weeks. While we hope we will never need to implement these plans, we are ready.

I'm cautiously optimistic that the new modeling being done for the state of Ohio and in our area specifically is showing improved projections for the surge of patients who will need COVID-19 care. That's a testament to the energy every one of you has put toward social distancing, staying home, adjusting the way you're working, and a renewed commitment to proper handwashing. So many have asked me "What can I do to help." Those practices are the answer. Those practices, along with the many donations of PPE and other supplies you and your organizations have given us. It's humbling to be part of this community that takes such great care of its neighbors.

While we hope we will never need to implement these surge plans, I am incredibly proud of how everyone has connected to collaborate in the best interest of our community and our patients. As always, please feel free to reach out to me with questions or suggestions.

Yours in good health,



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