Medical Staff Medical FAQ

March 17, 2020

Preparedness and Operational Guidelines

- **What is GW Hospital doing to prepare?**
  We are working closely and regularly with our partners at UHS, GW University and the GW Medical Faculty Associates to be proactive to this current outbreak. We are following guidelines from CDC, WHO and D.C. Department of Health including:
  - Early identification of suspected patients
  - Appropriate isolation of such patients – droplet and airborne
  - Use of the CDC recommended PPE
  - Patient testing under CDC and DC Health guidance
  - Safe disposition of such patients, to either inpatient admission to a proper setting or discharge

We have activated our incident command center at GW Hospital since March 11th to manage the situation to proactively address current and future developments in this evolving situation, including, but not limited to the following in response to this national emergency:
  - Impose visitor restrictions with temperature monitoring and symptoms questioning of all persons entering the hospital
  - Stand up a COVID19 screening tent for ED patients on the Hospital patio
  - Reopened the closed 4 North space (16 beds) which was starting to undergo renovation
  - Canceled elective cases for the week of March 16th
  - Acquired additional pharmaceuticals, ventilators, and ECMO circuits
  - Worked with Medical Staff Leaders on critical care, medical surgical, and ED surge plans

- **What are the visitor restrictions?**
  The George Washington University Hospital is temporarily restricting all visitors, as of March 13, 2020. Exceptions to these restrictions can be made in special circumstances, and by prior approval by the Incident Command Center, including:
  - End of Life Care,
  - Two parents or caregivers of pediatric patients, as long as neither is symptomatic,
  - Labor and delivery – two visitors including the professional support person or postpartum helper.
Visitors seeking approval ahead of arrival should call 202-715-4195. Those who arrive on site will begin the process with security. For all exceptions approved, individuals are subject to screening and will be prohibited if they have been in contact with someone with fever, cough or influenza-like symptoms within the last 48 hours, and/or have traveled to an affected country, as currently identified on the CDC Travel Health Notices list. Additionally, individuals will be required to practice effective hand hygiene upon entering the facility as well as entering and exiting a patient room.

- Can I still walk through the ED? How should I enter and exit the hospital?
The ED entrance is for those seeking medical care only. All employees and providers must enter and exit through the main lobby doors. Security is available after hours to assist employees in and out of the hospital main lobby entrance. You can contact security at x5000 after 10 p.m. and before 5:30 a.m. to exit and enter the main lobby for hospital business.

- What are the surge plans for the hospital?
We have a number of surge plans in place depending on the needs required and the severity of this situation. This includes plans for triaging patients depending on their level of illness, including triaging less ill individuals with suspected COVID in a tent on the hospital patio. We also have plans in place to have more experienced nurses partner with less experienced nurses, as well as bring in our nurses from ancillary departments to provide patient care. We are reviewing the hospital census and patient placement every 8 hours and are placing all suspected or actual COVID 19 patients in airborne isolation rooms. Should we exceed that capacity, we will look to place all COVID 19 patients on the same unit and expand the size as necessary.

- What should I do if I become ill outside of work?
All individuals who become ill or develop a fever or other respiratory symptoms, should NOT come to work.

Illness unrelated to work-related exposure should be handled as follows. Stay home and contact your healthcare provider. If you do not have a primary care physician, you can visit one of the GW Immediate and Primary Care locations in Cleveland Park, McPherson Square and Rhode Island Avenue:

- Cleveland Park  
  2902 Porter Street, NW  
  Washington, DC 20008  
  202-525-5287

- McPherson Square  
  1101 15th St NW  
  Washington, DC 20005  
  202-798-0100
• Rhode Island Ave
  2350 Washington Pl., NE
  Suite 110N
  Washington, DC 20018
  202-544-7580

• What if I have a work-related exposure?
  o Advanced Provider Practitioners and hospital employed physicians:
    Follow our standard exposure process and contact Sedgwick at 866-648-8994 and alert your manager. Their manager will report the exposure, as is the norm, to Infection Prevention. Incident command will be notified and assist as well as notify all potentially exposed staff to ensure standard processes are followed.

  o Medical Staff:
    Follow up with your supervisor/employer regarding any concerns you may have. Let Hazel Darisse know if you are sick and cannot perform your scheduled procedures. Be sure to have your office reschedule your patients’ procedures.

  o Residents:
    First, contact your program director to discuss your symptoms and call incident command at 202-715-4242.

Testing

• Are we able to test at GW Hospital?
  Yes, we have commercial testing capability at GW Hospital and physicians are able to place an order for a test. We expect to have on-site testing available at the beginning of April.

• Do we have a testing algorithm?
  Yes, we are screening individuals and asking them about their symptoms, checking for a fever and asking about international travel or potential exposure with a known case in the past 14 days.

• How do I order a test for a patient who may have COVID?
  If you are the attending physician and feel that you need to test a patient for COVID who is currently admitted, notify the bedside nurse, ensure that the patient is placed on contact and airborne precautions, order a respiratory PCR panel, consider consulting ID, and tiger text the GW Hospital House Operations Supervisor (HOS).

  The ED has a separate testing algorithm to test a patient, either commercially or through the DC Department of Health.
Patient Care

- **How are we screening patients prior to arrival?**
  Patients are called 48 hours before their outpatient appointment, test, or surgery to be screened. Patients will be notified about colonoscopies 72 hours prior to their procedure. If a patient arrives to GW Hospital or a hospital clinic they will be asked about symptoms. If they have any symptoms, the procedure will be canceled.

- **What are we doing about elective procedures?**
  We are reviewing our elective surgeries daily and making necessary changes based on conversations with department chairs and surgeons. We are currently canceling non-urgent, elective procedures for the week of March 16th. We will continue to monitor these upcoming procedures and make changes as necessary. Please reach out to Hazel Darisse with any questions.

- **What if my family member or someone I live with has tested positive?**
  Please inform your leader and self-isolate. Do not come to work. If you become symptomatic, please see above.

- **What if I have secondary exposure to someone who tested positive?**
  Secondary exposure occurs when you have been exposed to someone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19. CDC guidelines do not require any additional precautions or changes for the individual with secondary exposure. You do not need to report or self-quarantine unless you are directly exposed to someone with COVID-19 or become ill with a fever or cough.

- **Do we have PPE available?**
  We have Personal Protective Equipment available for all staff members who need it. Please see the unit leadership if you have any questions. If you have not been fit tested for N95 masks, please go to Employee Health to be fit tested.

- **Should I be fitted for an N95 mask?**
  If you are providing patient care, you should be fitted. You can get fitted Monday – Friday in Employee Health.

- **If I interact with a patient who later tests positive, will I be notified?**
  Yes, we will notify any staff who have interacted with a patient who has tested positive for COVID-19.

- **What happens if I am exposed to a known COVID19 patient in the healthcare setting?**
CDC Interim guidance on Healthcare Worker exposure will guide our evaluation of any healthcare worker exposure to COVID 19. Infection Prevention will perform a risk assessment of your exposure. If judged to be a low risk exposure, you will need to self monitor for 14 days for a fever. We have thermometers, gloves, mask and a temperature log available for you. If it is believed that you have had a medium or high risk exposure, you will need to self isolate for 14 days. This means that you cannot come to work. Monitor yourself for symptoms during this time period.

- **How is the room of a patient with COVID 19 cleaned?**
  We have an established process for terminally cleaning rooms that we use with highly infectious diseases such as TB and meningitis. We will follow that process in the event we have a positive COVID-19 patient.

- **Who do I reach out to if I have questions?**
  Please reach out to the incident command center at 202-715-4242 if you have questions or issues.

**Travel**

- **What are the travel restrictions?**
  The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all non-essential travel to Level 3 countries. Check with the CDC website before making travel plans. Here is a link to that website: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html)

- **What if I travel to a highly infected area?**
  Countries considered to be Level 3 risk by the CDC include:
  - China
  - South Korea
  - Iran
  - Italy
  - Most of Europe

  If you travel to one of these countries or any locations that CDC adds to Level 3, you must notify Human Resources at 202-715-4406. You will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days before returning to work, per CDC guidelines. In addition, we will require you to be examined by your physician and provide documentation before returning to work. Please check the CDC website for up-to-date travel information: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html).