

From: Rush_News
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2020 8:43 PM
To: Rush_News
Subject: COVID-19 Update – Rush System Readiness

COVID-19 Update

To: All Rush University System of Health
Fr: Dr. Ranga Krishnan, CEO, Rush University System for Health
Dr. Omar Lateef, DO, Rush University Medical Center
Re: COVID-19 Update – Rush System Readiness
Date: March 5, 2020

Dear colleagues,

We want to update you about Rush's system-wide efforts to prepare for a potential high level increase in cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Since the beginning of the year, our team has been meeting to sharpen our plans of preparedness, just as we have for major infectious disease situations in the past.

It's your dedication, expertise, and teamwork that make Rush one of the top health systems in the country. We are grateful for every one of you and all you do.

We currently are treating one patient and are expecting more. Below is a summary of what we already have done to prepare for a possible outbreak of COVID-19.

- **Planning and Response Coordination:** We are coordinating our work in this area across the entire Rush system. This effort is being led by the Hospital Incident Command at Rush University Medical Center. We also are coordinating with the departments of infection prevention and control at each Rush hospital. Additionally, we are working closely with city, state and federal health officials.
- **Screening:** We continue to communicate to frontline clinical staff the procedures to accurately assess clinical symptoms and to ask travel history questions and sick contact questions.
- **Case Identification:** We have developed procedures to rapidly identify and isolate suspected cases, with plans in place for how all of our facilities will respond to the potential arrival of COVID-19 patients. Those plans are in action and already working at Rush University Medical Center.
- **Patient Privacy:** Please remember that all our patients are entitled to privacy and their medical care at Rush is protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Complying with HIPAA requires that everyone at Rush maintain strict confidentiality of information about patients, especially any information that might allow another person to identify a patient. Also remember that patient records only may be accessed for dealing with

matters of treatment, payment or health care operations. Access for any other reasons is prohibited.

- **Supplies:** We have implemented plans to ensure that we have adequate supplies, including personal protective equipment (masks, eye shields, gowns and hand sanitizer). Appropriate use of these items is a shared responsibility to ensure we have the supplies needed to care for our patients.
 - **Masks** – Please only use N95 masks for the appropriate clinical setting: patients in airborne isolation/negative pressure rooms, which is the case for novel coronavirus/COVID-19. While these masks can be reusable in some settings, when used for care for coronavirus, these are not reusable and should not be used for multiple patients. Please be mindful of our supply of masks and their use.
 - **Hand sanitizer** – Please use it often but leave it where you find it so that it's accessible to all. A report from our supply chain this morning indicated we have hundreds of bottles expected to arrive in the next day or so.
- **Facilities Preparedness:** We have rigorous systems in place across Rush for screening and isolating any person who presents with COVID-19 symptoms, and then fully supporting their care as warranted.

Rush University Medical Center is one of 35 federally designated hospitals specifically designed to treat infectious diseases, which means we are staffed with renowned infectious disease specialists and equipped with the capabilities, training and facilities to provide the treatment necessary to care for a person with a complex or highly transmissible disease while minimizing risk to other patients.

With more than 40 negative pressure rooms – where the air is sanitized and then exhausted outside the building rather than circulated within – and the ability to scale up further, our facilities are extremely well equipped should the presence of the virus in Chicago escalate.

We also have implemented new temporary policies restricting both the number and age of visitors. These guidelines are similar to what is being put into place at hospitals across the country to protect the public and prevent the spread of the illness.

- **On-demand video visits:** As part of growing efforts to combat coronavirus, Rush University System for Health now offers [on-demand video visits](#) for people who are concerned they might be infected with the novel 2019 coronavirus. A Rush provider will assess a patient's condition and walk them through next steps, including how to come to Rush for care. Video visits are available 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- **My Rush Mobile App** – all employees and students should download [the My Rush mobile app](#) for information about the COVID-19 virus and future access to e-visits. We will continue to enhance our digital platform to be responsive to this dynamic situation.
- **Communications:** Over the past few weeks, we have distributed multiple communications to our internal audiences and to the communities our hospitals serve. Materials have included leadership memos, preparedness fliers, podcasts/videos with Rush infection control experts and more. News media coverage continues to position Rush as a leader and valuable resource.

In addition, we have created some instructional and informational videos, linked here, with more on the way:

- [Putting on Personal Protective Equipment Properly](#)
- [Coronavirus: What You Need to Know](#)
- [Rush Coronavirus Update](#)

For more information

We will continue to keep you up to date. For more information, please see the following:

- [Novel Coronavirus Information and Resources on rush.edu](#)
- [Rush University Medical Center's infection prevention intranet page](#)
- **Our Rush community can post questions to [our discussion board on Inside Rush](#)**
- Anyone in the Rush community – including students, faculty, employees and volunteers, can call the command center at ext. 7-SAFE.
- **For patients, please refer them to the Rush Call Center** at ext. 2-5555 or (888) 352-7874 (Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. As of Friday, March 6, the call center will be open 24/7 for the next few weeks).
- If you have concerns about a patient who may meet the criteria, please contact Infection Prevention and Control:
 - At [Rush University Medical Center](#), Infection Prevention and Control can be reached at 312-942-3060 or ext. 2-3060 (Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.) or page 85-7424 (during off hours and weekends).
 - At [Rush Oak Park Hospital](#), Infection Prevention and Control can be reached at (708) 660-2028 or ext. 6-2028 (Monday-Friday) or page 85-5456 (during off hours and weekends).
 - At [Rush Copley Medical Center](#), Infection Prevention and Control can be reached at (630) 978-4831 (Monday-Friday) or page: 630-218-3425.
- General city information: Chicago Department of Public Health at (312) 746-4835
- IDPH COVID-19 Hotline at (800) 889-3931 or at dph.sick@Illinois.gov