March 27, 2020 UPDATES ON COVID-19

Bradford Regional Medical Center and Olean General Hospital today released the following updates and reminders regarding the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic:

CONFIRMED CASES – The Cattaraugus County Department of Healthy confirmed the first positive COVID-19 case today. Thus far, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in McKean County, as reported by the Department of Health. The lack of testing kits throughout the U.S. continues to be an issue and therefore, the lack of confirmed cases probably isn’t a true measure of COVID-19 activity in our communities. Therefore, it is important for our patients and residents to practice social distancing, staying home unless necessary, practicing good hand hygiene, etc., to prevent the spread of this virus.

SURGE PLAN – Reacting to New York state Gov. Cuomo’s call to expand hospital bed capacity statewide, our facilities staff has done an amazing job. New York state hospitals were asked to increase bed capacity in preparation for a patient surge by 50 percent. While no formal request was submitted by Pennsylvania, we decided to be proactive and plan for additional surge at BRMC as well. In Olean, the Outpatient Surgery Center will be reconfigured for additional hospital beds by April 1 and in Bradford, the fourth floor will be reopened, allowing us to accommodate additional patients as well. We’re here for our community first and foremost. Our goal is to create enough capacity to serve local needs. At this point, we do not know if or how quickly our bed needs will grow. There are no plans, discussions, and highly unlikely for any patient from outside the region to transfer to Olean General Hospital or Bradford Regional Medical Center.

SUPPLY NEEDS – Currently, OGH and BRMC have an adequate supply of PPE for our staff. With that said, we are also awaiting a shipment of additional masks, gowns and other materials. We plan to universally mask all staff once we have a new supply of masks. We are also awaiting the shipment of additional face shields which are being manufactured locally and will be delivered next week. We have an adequate supply of ventilators for both hospitals.

Hospitals across the U.S. are competing for resources. N95 and non N95 masks are in high demand among all healthcare facilities. Recently, a regional corporation donated 1,000 N95 masks to a hospital in its effort to help out. Anyone who may have an extra supply of masks and would be willing to donate them to BRMC and OGH, can contact communications@uahs.org.

STAY AT HOME – The New York and Pennsylvania governors have issued business and school closings in an effort to keep people at home. It really is an important step to help slow the spread of the illness. Medical staff are working tirelessly to prepare and care for patients. Taking preventative measures are vital to help healthcare facilities manage patient care during this pandemic. We know these restrictions can be emotionally and financially frustrating but it’s important to do your part to keep you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors safe and healthy.

TESTING - For testing information, please call your healthcare provider. DO NOT CALL THE HOSPITAL OR COME TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR PHYSICIAN OFFICE PRACTICES. Communications have been sent to healthcare providers regarding testing guidelines. Healthcare providers will need to determine whether or not the individual needs to be tested. If the healthcare provider approves someone for testing, the provider (not the individual) will contact the
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. Finally, the individual will be notified by the DOH if he or she should be tested and/or quarantined at home.

VISITATION POLICY - OGH and BRMC have suspended all visitation at the hospitals and The Pavilion.

SCREENING UPON ENTRANCE – We continue to screen all individuals that enter our facilities. We started screening employees on March 23.

IF YOU ARE SICK - Avoid contact with others; stay home when you are sick. If you have a fever (100.4 degrees F/38 degrees C or higher), cough, or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider and explain your symptoms. They will instruct you on how to proceed. If your symptoms are severe, such as difficulty breathing/shortness of breath, pain/pressure in the chest, please call the emergency room in advance. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness.

CORONAVIRUS PLANNING – Bradford Regional Medical Center and Olean General Hospital have established an organization-wide coronavirus steering committee and command center operation to address this pandemic. The group has been coordinating emergency preparedness, response efforts, as well as daily communication with state and county agencies. Those efforts continue around the clock in the health system.

Note: Olean General Hospital and Bradford Regional Medical Center will not share personal information about patients tested, treated or admitted for COVID-19 in order to protect their privacy as required by federal law.