

**TO:** UC Health Employees & Clinicians

**FROM:** Richard P. Lofgren, MD  
UC Health President & CEO

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**DATE:** Friday, Nov. 13, 2020

**RE:** UC Health Activates Surge Operations Amid Rising COVID-19 Hospitalizations

Throughout the pandemic, each of you has shown your unrivaled commitment, compassion and perseverance through the greatest of challenges. "Thank you" does not seem like enough to express the gratitude we feel for each of you.

As we all know, COVID-19 cases continue to rise throughout our country and in our region. We have reached all-time highs in our area for cases, hospitalizations and critical care hospitalizations in a day, and models project numbers 60% higher by Thanksgiving than we are experiencing today.

This is causing a tremendous burden on the healthcare systems in our region. Our primary concern is having adequate staffing to safely care for patients and to ensure the health and well-being of each of you.

We must take steps today to deal with the coming patient surge.

**Therefore, UC Health has activated surge operations for the entire health system, which is particularly impactful in the intensive care units.**

This includes the measures outlined below, which will ensure decisions made regarding transfers, surgeries and procedures are done in conjunction with system leadership's overview, as opposed to individual silos:

#### **External Transfers from Other Hospitals**

Effective **immediately**, no external transfer can be accepted to an ICU without the approval of the critical care attending on service for that particular unit.

This will create a focal point for consultation and decision about which patients most need to be admitted to ensure care is safe, and we have the clinicians, staff, beds and equipment to provide that care.

Additionally, we are building a similar transfer acceptance policy for medical-surgical level of care. More information will be shared soon.

### **Elective Surgeries – Inpatient and Outpatient**

Effective **Monday, Nov. 16, 2020**, a 50% reduction of inpatient elective cases will begin. This will be monitored daily for necessary changes as recommended by the Perioperative Clinical Domain Team. Outpatient elective cases will continue to be monitored for possible reduction.

The determination of which surgeries are able to go forward will be a discussion with the appropriate surgical leader and the Perioperative Clinical Domain Team.

### **Elective Procedures – Inpatient and Outpatient**

Effective **Monday, Nov. 16, 2020**, a 50% reduction of elective inpatient procedures will begin. Please note that inpatients awaiting a procedure prior to discharge can go forward. Outpatient elective procedures will continue to be monitored for possible reduction.

### **Ambulatory Care**

Effective **immediately**, practices will move patient appointments to telehealth where appropriate and feasible, and will reduce non-time essential visits, as they deem appropriate. If you have any questions regarding telehealth, please contact Abigail Marker ([abigail.marker@uchealth.com](mailto:abigail.marker@uchealth.com)).

### **Staffing**

We have activated surge status and planning, which includes activating disaster plan staffing for physicians through the site medical executive committees, nurses and clinical staff.

Each of us may be asked to help in new ways by completing new or different tasks, working different hours or even assisting at different locations within our organization.

If you are asked to take on a new responsibility, you can expect appropriate training and preparation.

### **Site Incident Command Centers**

All three inpatient sites have reassembled incident command centers (ICCs).

This group of leaders will monitor our hospital's resources and patient flow, and inform the COVID-19 Core Team when the sites have reached triggers to activate new phases of the surge plan.

### **Taking Care of You**

Community spread is the primary way that this virus is affecting our staff and clinicians. We continue to see an alarming increase of staff out of work due to COVID-19. We must stand together to role model precautions in our personal lives so that we can continue to care for those who need it most.

As you help others, we are here to help you. Visit The Link to learn about employee well-being resources, available leave or short-term disability if you or a loved one is sick, subsidized childcare, offers for healthcare workers and more. Our THRIVE wellness program is a wonderful resource for information, including practical ways to care for yourself and those you love.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to [covid19@uchealth.com](mailto:covid19@uchealth.com).

As a combined leadership team, we are continuously monitoring the situation, and fully anticipate that additional reductions in certain care will continue to be made.

We will communicate with you often, via The Link and emails, and, if necessary, RAVE notifications will be utilized.

We greatly appreciate everyone's dedication and effort. The health and well-being of our employees, clinicians and patients continues to be our top priority.

We will get through this, together.

Thank you for everything you do.