

April 10, 2020

To members of our community,

Over these past several weeks, our lives have changed dramatically. Each day, we learn more about the COVID-19 virus, which just two months ago, seemed a world away. Now, it is in our own backyard, and no one in Michigan will be untouched by the effects of this virus.

At Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, our clinical leadership team has been working around the clock preparing to care for our community in new ways. We have had to cancel classes and elective procedures, create work-at-home policies for our support colleagues, and develop robust clinical staffing models to make way for restructuring our hospitals into Intensive Care-ready Units for the outbreak of COVID-19 in our communities. Our southeast Michigan hospitals in Livonia, Oakland, Chelsea, Livingston, and Ann Arbor are in the hotspot of Michigan COVID-19.

As part of Trinity Health, our parent company and national Catholic health care system, we are working together to keep you, our communities and clinicians as safe and healthy as we possibly can. We have:

- **Enforced "No Visitor" restrictions** – Under Governor Gretchen Whitmer's Executive Order, we continue to restrict all visitors from entering our facilities, with very limited exceptions. We know this is very difficult for our patients and their loved ones but know that this is in the best interest of protecting everyone's health. We continue to roll out virtual options for patients to connect as well as encourage them to utilize the technology of their phones to connect with their loved ones. [See our current visitor policy.](#)
- **Canceled all non-urgent elective procedures** – All non-urgent surgical and elective procedures have been postponed. Urgent or emergent surgeries and procedures will continue based on need for urgent intervention. Our first priority is to safeguard patients and staff while maintaining our commitment to the well-being of our patients. We also need to redirect resources including staff and supplies to the treatment of patients with the virus.
- **Enhanced our virtual options for care** – Our IHA and St. Joe's Medical Group providers are expanding [e-visits](#) and [video appointments](#) so that patients still have access to needed health care, from the safety of their own home.
- **Added a COVID-19 hotline** – To help patients stay connected to the latest information on COVID-19 and to find a primary care physician if you do not currently have one, you may call **1-833-247-1258**.
- **Opened Testing and Screening Locations** – We have increased our testing capability through our own labs allowing us to get results within 24 hours. We opened *screening centers* at several of our hospitals and are partnering with IHA to offer a [free online CoVid-19 screening tool](#).

- **We continue to work closely with public health officials** – Every day, we are learning new things about the spread of this virus, the numbers of those infected continue to rise, and we must be nimble and adapt in ways that keep our patients and clinicians safe. We are working closely with public health officials at the local, state and national levels to monitor the spread of the virus as well as our colleagues at other health systems as things continue to change rapidly.
- **We continue to monitor crucial supplies** – This includes masks, hand sanitizer and other personal protective equipment. We have placed orders for additional supplies. We are also [accepting donations](#) of protective gear from the community. Please visit our website to learn how to donate supplies and funding specifically for the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Prioritizing the health and safety of our health care workers.** We are fully committed to ensuring the safest environment possible for our colleagues who continue to report to work and take care of our patients. Although we face challenges, we are working diligently to provide the necessary equipment and staff needed to ensure everyone's safety.

The outpouring of community support has been palpable. We are grateful for the ongoing support – both in-kind and financial – and the prayers and encouragement for our health care workers and patients at this time.

While we know COVID-19 concerns are high, we do not want patients' conditions to deteriorate or for urgent needs to become emergent due to a reluctance to seek appropriate care. We are still a fully functional Emergency Room with the ability to provide 24/7 care for cardiac issues, trauma, strokes, and other concerns. To protect all patients, we have implemented a vigorous screening process. With strict safety measures in place, the emergency room at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland remains a safe place for non-COVID patients to seek care for urgent and emergent needs.

I implore that the most important thing you can do to stay well and to help negate the spread of this virus is to stay home.

**If you experience a life-threatening emergency, call 911. If you think you have COVID-19, call your doctor. If you are having difficulty breathing, go to your closest Emergency Room.**

Thank you for choosing St. Joe's as your health care provider. Together, we will get through this, and we stand ready to care for you in this deep time of need.

Please visit [www.stjoeshealth.org/covid19](http://www.stjoeshealth.org/covid19) for continuous updates and to access telehealth options.

In good health,



Shannon D. Striebich  
President, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland