

Addressing Health Care Worker & Patient Safety

IN THE SETTING OF COVID-19

As frontline health care workers, we are concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic, and how we protect ourselves and our patients in the days and weeks ahead. We are calling on hospital administrators to implement the following:

- 1 Comprehensive Access to Personal Protective Equipment for Direct Patient Care** – PPE is our first line of defense against COVID-19. All staff involved in direct patient care must have access to all necessary PPE. Additionally, all at-risk healthcare workers with other risk factors (e.g. pregnant, immunocompromised) should have access to PPE, regardless of work area.
- 2 Hospitals Must Join Nurses' Demand for Immediate PPE Supplies from Feds and NYS**– Hospital execs must demand local, state, and federal officials take extraordinary efforts to secure the PPE supply chain including forcing manufacturers under the Defense Production Act.
- 3 Employee Access to COVID-19 Testing** – Any health care worker involved in patient care should have guaranteed access to testing for the virus, regardless of symptoms.
- 4 Widespread Testing, No Rationing** – Hospital execs must demand local, state, and federal officials make widespread testing available immediately, and condemn any attempt to ration or policies that lead to disparities in access to testing, such as the NYC-DOH's current guidelines.
- 5 Focus on More than PPE Conservation** – The hospital must take immediate steps to implement administrative, engineering, and source controls and stop limiting PPE.
- 6 Give Frontline Caregivers a Voice in Decisions** – The hospital must give frontline caregivers access to information and a voice in critical decisions, such as PPE protocols, reconfiguring space, modifications to practices that limit exposure, and staffing selection on COVID-19 units.
- 7 Develop Specialized Units, Expand Space for Patient Care & Promote Cross-Training** – We need to develop specialized areas to house COVID-19 patients and dedicated training on best practices for COVID care. We must utilize elective procedure areas or other spaces to eliminate overcrowding, and we need to provide full support for any staff assigned to unfamiliar areas.
- 8 Provide Childcare** – The hospital should provide access to a pool of childcare providers, at least until city or county officials secure childcare for healthcare and other essential workers.
- 9 Provide Housing or Alternate Accommodations** – Many healthcare providers have at-risk family members, so now is the time for the hospital to secure lodging arrangements at nearby hotels for staff who require them to keep working.
- 10 Provide Unlimited Sick Time for COVID+ Caregivers that Get Sick**- No caregiver that puts their health on the line to care for COVID patients, and gets sick, should have to use their own time to recuperate. All sick time while out due to COVID must be paid by the Hospitals.