



TO: All Caregivers

FROM: Hans Cassagnol, MD, Executive Vice President, Chief Clinical Officer & Chief Physician Executive

DATE: April 4, 2020

RE: Testing, Research, N95 Sterilization, Death Certificate Filing

**Flu/RSV Testing:**

Over the past several weeks there has been a dramatic decline in cases of Influenza and RSV in our region with observed test positivity rates below 1%. In light of these findings and the significant shortages on testing supplies, Catholic Health is advising that routine influenza and RSV testing be reserved only for patients when a high clinical suspicion exists. When the next influenza and RSV season begins (typically in late fall/ early winter) usual practices for testing should resume as in prior seasons.

**Clinical & Process Improvement Research:**

One investigational treatment, led by Dr Shiley, being explored for COVID-19 involves the use of convalescent plasma collected from recovered COVID-19 patients. It is possible that convalescent plasma that contains antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) might be effective against the infection. Use of convalescent plasma has been studied in outbreaks of other respiratory infections, including the 2009-2010 H1N1 influenza virus pandemic, 2003 SARS-CoV-1 epidemic, and the 2012 MERS-CoV epidemic. Although promising, convalescent plasma has not been shown to be effective in every disease studied. It is therefore important to determine through clinical trials, before routinely administering convalescent plasma to patients with COVID-19, that it is safe and effective to do so.

We will need your support to reach out to possible donors in the near future.

We are being sought out by large National Healthcare Systems and local community partners to collaboratively work on:

- Process Improvement / Lean Six Sigma Research
- Biomedical / Investigational Drugs & Biologics Research
- Social & Behavioral Research

**N95 Respirators and Use of Makeup:**

N95 Respirators are an important component in the PPE used to care for many suspect and confirmed COVID-19 cases at our institutions. Presently, Catholic Health continues

to distribute factory-new N95 to associates. However, due to ongoing supply issues throughout the world, Catholic Health has instituted a collection practice for used N95 respirators in the event a formal sterilization and recycling protocol should be needed in the future as part of our contingency planning.

In light of this, we ask that associates avoid using makeup on the portions of the face that would be in direct contact with an N95 respirator during use. Makeup can stain the N95's material that is in contact with the face. While this staining is not thought to lead to loss of mask integrity or functionality, it does not come off in the FDA approved sterilization process, which may lead to confusion among caregivers about the sterility of the respirator.

Catholic Health understands the immense dedication and sacrifice of our caregivers during this unprecedented crisis. Indeed, this request to refrain from using those things that make many of our caregivers feel our best each day is another sacrifice that we do not take lightly.

Thank you for your service, sacrifice and understanding.



### **New Notice around COVID-19 Death Certificate Filing:**

New guidelines published yesterday – COVID-19 Death Certificate Filing Proxy

- More guidance to come with our next memo