Dear USA Health Family:

As we enter our second month of planning and executing initiatives related to COVID-19, we continue to see what makes USA Health such a special place. As the only academic health system in this region, the community looks to us for leadership. The commitment each of you continues to show in keeping our community safe is extraordinary. This has not gone unnoticed and it has been rewarding to see the outpouring of support from those we serve. The work you are doing is making a difference!

Our region has begun to see the anticipated upswing in cases of COVID-19. You continue to be on the frontlines as more people are coming to us in need of treatment. As frontline caregivers in this pandemic, we continue to monitor and implement national and regional best practices to maintain as safe a healthcare environment as possible for our patients and staff during this public health crisis. This week we established a PPE governance committee that is monitoring guidelines, working to procure equipment to ensure an adequate supply, accepting donations and developing protocols for efficient and effective usage. As part of this effort, we are implementing a universal mask policy, effective today. We will be posting the protocols on https://www.usahealthsystem.com/covid-19-employees. These protocols will address the proper masks to be used in varying environments within the health system. The policy and protocol do allow for personally owned masks and provide guidance for their proper use. Additionally, we will be posting a video on the site related to proper mask use. We hope you find it informative and instructive. Again, we are doing all we can to provide a safe environment to our community and to you, our valued staff.

One of the more visible activities this week has been the standing up of a drive-thru testing site at Ladd-Peebles Stadium. On Thursday we moved our testing location for USA Health patients, employees and first responders to the site. On Monday, members of the general public can gain access to the site through a screening process and appointment. We are partnering with the City of Mobile on this effort to meet the needs of our region. It is not easy to make a project like this happen at a remote location. Not many people understand the tremendous logistical work that goes into establishing something of this nature. Everyone involved in this endeavor, both in getting it set up and in the future operation, is to be commended.

One demonstration of how much people in our community want our clinical services is the significant increase we have seen in people taking part in virtual visits. We started this project at the end of last week and had just a few patients partake. Now we are seeing more than 100 such visits per day as people continue to seek healthcare from the region's only academic health system. We anticipate those numbers to continue to increase.

Finally, last Sunday evening members of the community came out in their cars to both University Hospital and Children's & Women's Hospital, turned on their lights and emergency flashers to show their appreciation to all our staff who are working so hard during this health emergency. A similar event is planned for this Sunday, 6:30-7:30 pm. Please let your friends and neighbors know of this opportunity to show appreciation to our staff.

To each of you, thank you for the tremendous effort and sacrifice you are putting forward as we continue to work to keep our community safe.

Sincerely,

G. Owen Bailey, MHA, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer, USA Health

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