

December 22, 2020

Good morning,

Yesterday was the winter solstice. It was the shortest amount of day light and the longest night. If there was ever a more fitting holiday for 2020, I do not know what it is. Today, however, we begin the inexorable march to summer. It will be light out for moments longer, and the dark will be pushed back. This is an apt metaphor for 2020 as well. With vaccinations increasing and hospital census improved, there are signs of hope at the end of a long year.

### Vaccine Updates

#### Kaleida Health Vaccination Program – Additional Departments/Units Now Eligible for COVID-19 Vaccines: Sign Up Now!

- **The schedule is now open for providers, residents and fellows who work in the following areas:** Anesthesia (Anesthesiologists and anesthesia residents), Emergency Medicine (Emergency physicians, APPs, and residents dedicated to the ED), Family Medicine – Hospitalists, Internal Medicine – Critical Care (Intensivists, APPs, and residents dedicated to the ICU), Internal Medicine – Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine, Internal Medicine – Pulmonary Disease & Critical Care Medicine, COVID unit hospitalists, APPs, and residents dedicated to the COVID units, and Surgery – Critical Care
- **Newly Added Areas** - Only those aged 50 and older can sign up for now. We will communicate when the schedule is open to those under 50 in the following areas: Dentistry, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, Radiation Oncology, Radiology, Rehabilitation Medicine, Surgery, Thoracic/Cardiovascular Surgery and Urology
- If you are not sure if you are included in one of these groups, please speak with your site's CMO
- Please note: While we have a limited supply of vaccine, we want to ensure that we are using all the supply we currently have available. There will be additional offerings as vaccine doses become available so please keep checking back to the schedule
- **Appointments are REQUIRED.** If you work in one of these areas, please check your email for a link to schedule your appointment. Please coordinate your vaccine appointment time with members of your team so we can facilitate your appointment with the needs of patient care

### In Memoria

Our medical staff has lost two beloved colleagues in the past week.

**Poje, Christopher (1959-2020):** Dr. Poje was an ENT specialist associated with Oishei Children's Hospital and Kaleida Health. He was a 1985 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania' School of Medicine. He has been a beloved member of the medical staff and a fixture in the community since completing his training and coming to Buffalo in 1993. In his career, he cared for over 40,000 pediatric patients and their families and will be greatly missed.



**Brass, Corstiaan (Chris) (1948 – 2020):** Dr. Brass was in his 47<sup>th</sup> year of practice at the time of his death. He was a gifted clinician whose passion for treating the whole person and being with them through the entirety of the medical journey was reflected in the care he offered every patient. A 1973 graduate of the University of Calgary School of Medicine and an infection disease specialist in Buffalo for many years, Dr. Brass was a mentor to generations of physicians and his contributions to our profession will be felt for years to come.



**Mini Grand Rounds: COVID-19 Vaccine and Pregnancy**

- We will be restarting the Wednesday Mini Grand Rounds series earlier than expected due to significant interest in the question of safety during pregnancy during COVID-19
- On January 6, 2021 at 7:30, Drs. Sarah Berga and Heather Link will discuss this important topic
- To join the meeting: <https://lynmeet.kaleidahealth.org/droman/M4TTL8WD>

**COVID-19 Updates**

**Hospital Census:** As of 1 p.m. yesterday, there were 179 patients in Kaleida Health hospitals who had been diagnosed with COVID-19. 142 were in medical beds and 37 in the ICU. To learn more: <https://www.kaleidahealth.org/kyi/news/?i=15336>

**Erie County, New York State and United States Status (as of December 20, 2020)**

Region	Positivity Rate (7-day average)	New Cases in past 24 hours	ICU Reserve Capacity
Erie County	5.6% (5.9% rolling average)	346	Not available
New York State	5.8% (5.4% rolling average)	9,007	62%
United States	11.44%	233,271	Not available

**Hospital Updates**

**Dr. Sheri Wagner Named New Medical Director of the Pediatric Hospitalist Service**

- UBMD Pediatrics and John R. Oishei Children’s Hospital are pleased to announce Sheri L. Wagner, MD, as the Medical Director of the Pediatric Hospitalist Service
- Dr. Wagner will ensure the highest quality of care of children who are hospitalized at Oishei Children’s Hospital by providing administrative oversight of the Pediatric Hospitalist Service, and setting and implementing standards of performance to maximize patient, family and referring provider satisfaction
- Read more at: <https://www.kaleidahealth.org/kyi/news/?i=15316>

**Practice Updates**

**Updates to Provider Immunity During COVID-19 Pandemic**

- **Key Points:** New York State has narrowed the scope of previously enacted COVID-19 immunity legislation [“Emergency or Disaster Treatment Protection Act”]. Immunity is now available only for actions taken specifically to care for patients with COVID-19. This change effects care delivered on or after August 3, 2020
- **Background:**
  - In March of 2020, NYS issued several Executive Orders which afforded wide, but temporary, protections to providers who cared for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic
  - In April of 2020 as a part of the budget, the Emergency or Disaster Treatment Protection Act was passed, offering relatively broad protections to those arranging for or providing care to patients during the COVID-19 emergency
  - In August of 2020, the Governor and legislature modified the Emergency or Disaster Treatment Protection Act and removed liability protection for health care professionals providing services related to the “prevention of” COVID-19 or “arranging of” care for COVID-19 patients and limited the protections to those caring for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19
  - The August 2020 amendment also eliminated liability protections for services provided by health care facilities and professionals caring for other individuals with non-COVID conditions during the period of the COVID-19 emergency declaration
  - The removal of these protections will leave healthcare professionals fully accountable for actions or inactions that are not involved in the direct diagnosis, treatment, assessment, or care of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients

### Vaccine Information

- New York State Department of Health
  - NYS has put up a website to serve as a common source for information on the COVID-19 vaccine
  - It is available at: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>
- CDC COVID-19 Vaccination
  - The CDC has posted their vaccine information at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>

### CPT Codes for 2021

- There have been significant changes to the requirements for documentation and billing in 2021
- The E/M office visit modifications include:
  - Eliminating history and physical exam as elements for code selection
  - Allowing physicians to choose the best patient care by permitting code level selection based on medical decision-making (MDM) or total time
  - Promoting payer consistency with more detail added to CPT code descriptors and guidelines
- To learn more: <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2019-06/cpt-office-prolonged-svs-code-changes.pdf>

### Patient Education

**Mini Med School: Everything you need to know about COVID. Here is your chance - ask our experts!**

- The Jacobs School of Medicine hosted a session for patients looking to have a better understanding of the coronavirus
- It is available at:  
<http://medicine.buffalo.edu/alumni/mini-med-school/mini-medical-school.html>

### **WNY Working Group Releases COVID-19 Instruction Sheet**

Yesterday, the ILI/COVID Working Group of Western New York – a group of more than 20 healthcare and health-related organizations – released a COVID-19 instruction sheet to help us fight this disease: <https://www.kaleidahealth.org/services/PR/WNY-Working-Group-COVID-Instruction-Sheet-12212020.pdf>

### **Learning Opportunities**

#### **Greater New York Hospital Association: Critical Care Controversies Series: Managing COVID-19-Associated ARDS**

- This **debate-style program** will feature ICU clinicians advocating opposite sides of a provocative position statement that will be determined prior to the event by an ICU clinician moderator. Audience members also will indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement, once prior to the debate and again at its conclusion. The Controversies series is intended to build community among clinicians in a fun, collegial format with ample audience participation
- When:
  - January 7, 2021
  - 4-5 p.m.
- To register:  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2414818216623910160>

### **Updates in the Literature**

#### **What are the ingredients of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine?**

- An article was published in MIT Technology Review discussing the COVID-19 vaccine
- The authors review how the vaccine was made
- The full article is available at:  
<https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/12/09/1013538/what-are-the-ingredients-of-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine/>

#### **A guide to who can safely get the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine**

- An article was published in STAT News discussing vaccine safety
- The authors review the risks and benefits of getting the vaccine
- The full article is available at:  
<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/14/a-guide-to-who-can-safely-get-the-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine/>

Today's theme is about gratitude. At 8:45 in the morning of December 6, 1917, a French cargo ship filled with munitions the *SS Mont Blanc* collided with another ship in Halifax Harbor, Nova Scotia. A fire broke out immediately and 15 minutes later it reached the cargo hold. At 9:04 a.m., the ship exploded and leveled every

building within a ½ mile radius killing or injuring thousands. News of the disaster spread rapidly as the City of Halifax scrambled to care for the wounded people. The citizens of Boston, upon hearing of the explosion, filled a train with medical supplies and providers. They rushed north to help. Their collective efforts saved the lives of over 8,000 accident victims. The residents of Halifax were so touched by this effort that the following year, they donated a large Christmas tree to the city of Boston. That tradition continues today with a new tree arriving in Boston each December. It gives each community a chance to take a moment out of their busy lives to remember heroes from years past and express gratitude for help from distant friends. It is an important lesson for us all to remember in 2020. This year, as the community stops to celebrate Christmas and the New Year, they will be giving thanks for the work that all have done and the service that you have offered. Much like the people of Halifax and Boston, a century from now, Western New Yorkers will look back at this moment and the work you have done with deep gratitude. This Christmas will look different than those of years past. We are separated by a virus, but as you take a moment this holiday to rest and recover, know that you have the thanks and support of the entire community.

**Daily Brief Updates:** Because of the upcoming holidays, there will only be an update on Tuesday, December 22 and Tuesday, December 29. Our usual Friday reports will be paused.

As always, your input is critical to ensure that this brief meets the needs of the community. Please send comments to [coronavirusupdates@kaleidahealth.org](mailto:coronavirusupdates@kaleidahealth.org).

David P. Hughes, MD, MPH  
*EVP, Chief Medical Officer  
Kaleida Health*

Kenneth Snyder, MD, PhD  
*Chief Physician Quality Officer  
Kaleida Health*

Jamie Nadler, MD  
*Medical Director of Quality and Patient Safety  
Kaleida Health*

David Pierce, MD  
*Chief Medical Officer  
Buffalo General Medical Center/Gates Vascular Institute*

Michael Mineo, MD  
*Chief Medical Officer  
Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital and  
DeGraff Medical Park*

Stephen Turkovich, MD  
*Chief Medical Officer  
Oishei Children's Hospital*

Richard Charles, MD  
*Chief Medical Officer  
General Physician, PC*

Thomas Hughes, MD  
*Chief Medical Officer  
Optimum Physician Alliance*

## Questions

If you have questions, please reach out ([coronavirusupdates@kaleidahealth.org](mailto:coronavirusupdates@kaleidahealth.org)), and we will do our best to get you the information you need.