



January 4, 2022

Dear Stakeholder Community,

I'm writing to inform you of a COVID outbreak among patients at Oregon State Hospital's Salem campus. As of today, Tuesday, Jan. 4, we have had 29 new COVID-positive patients since Dec. 29, most from Leaf 3 and Bird 1, with additional patients from Flower 3 identified today. We expect that number to rise, given the high-risk exposures involved. Also, as of today, we are aware of 32 staff who have tested positive since December 27.

A little over half of the positive patients are symptomatic. Many of the positive cases are vaccinated but none have had booster doses. Patients on the primary outbreak units who had boosters did not test positive, pointing to the effectiveness of boosters. All eligible patients had been offered booster doses before this outbreak. Physicians and nurse practitioners are encouraging their patients to get vaccinated or boosted if they refused the first time around.

Our infection prevention protocols remain stringent. We have not yet received gene sequencing results, but we expect the outbreak is due to the highly transmissible Omicron variant. To provide further protection to our patients, we have paused admissions for the time being and have notified DOJ and DRO of our need to make this decision.

Many of the COVID-positive patients were moved to Lighthouse 3 (LH3) or Anchor 3 (AN3) over the weekend, before testing was complete. Both are Harbors units currently being used for patients who have a high-risk exposure to, or have been diagnosed with, COVID. However, with the rapid increase in cases and the significant number of patients on the primary outbreak units who are asymptomatic but COVID-positive, we have also fully closed Leaf 3 (LF3), Bird 1 (BD1) and Flower 3 (FW3). They are temporarily being treated as PUI/COVID units for their patients. This means:

- Staff on LF3, BD1 and FW3 are required to wear full PPE (N95, face shield, gown, gloves). Training and PPE are being provided, and locks will be changed where needed to facilitate medical isolation.
- Patients are expected to isolate in their rooms. Those who tested negative are encouraged to wear masks.



- Unlike the Harbors PUI/COVID units, we will NOT be transferring patients from other units to LF3, BD1, or FW3. The only exception is that we may transfer patients *back* to these units, if we need bed capacity on LH3/AN3.
- We've asked all staff to wear their N95 masks if they have been fit-tested.
 - The majority of nursing and direct care staff have already been fit tested.
 - The screening stations have been stocked with N95 respirators to make it easy for those who are fit tested to pick one up if they need one.

If we have significant outbreaks on other units, we will convert them to PUI/COVID units for their own patients as well.

There is no patient commingling on the Salem campus at this time. Non-urgent medical and dental clinic appointments, including outside medical appointments, will be rescheduled. On-grounds movement on both campuses is permitted if patients stay with groups from their own unit.

For staff who become ill, [OHA recently published new return-to-work guidelines](#), which are essentially the same as the [CDC's updated guidelines for healthcare workers](#). We're reaching out to the unions to discuss how to implement these guidelines in a manner that respects everybody's privacy and safety. For now, we continue to apply the return-to-work guidelines we've been using up to this point.

I will keep you informed of any significant updates.

Best,

Dolores Matteucci

Dolly Matteucci (she, her, hers)
Oregon State Hospital
Superintendent – CEO