

# Message from Vinson M. Yates, President, OhioHealth Mansfield & Shelby Hospitals

April 3, 2020

Dear Community Partner,

Hello again from OhioHealth Mansfield and Shelby hospitals. As we enter the month of April, preparations continue for the projected increase of COVID-19 patients in our community, across the state, and across the nation. I want you to know that the entire OhioHealth team is here for you, your family, and your neighbors. Every day, our team is working closely with Ohio hospitals, agencies, and community organizations and the collaboration has been tremendous. We're all working with one goal: to keep our community safe and to prepare for this pandemic health crisis.

I'd like to begin this note by taking a moment to recognize the work of Battelle in developing an innovative cleaning process that allows us to re-use and conserve Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers. I sincerely thank Governor DeWine for pushing the FDA to approve expanded use of this new technology and am immensely proud that OhioHealth is partnering with Battelle in this effort.

I also wanted to take a few minutes to let you know about some important developments happening here in Richland, Crawford, Ashland, and surrounding counties.

**EMERGENCY ENTRANCE TENT:** If you've driven by Mansfield or Shelby hospitals, or our Emergency Care center in Ontario, may have noticed that we have placed tents outside our Emergency entrances, allowing us to quickly separate patients who have flu-like symptoms from those who do not. **These tents are NOT test sites for COVID-19 screening.** The tents will be used if a significant surge in emergency patients occurs due to COVID-19 and outside triage is needed. This will help limit the exposure to other members of the community and care team.

**NEW DROP OFF LOCATION FOR PATIENT VALUABLES AND SUPPORT:** We know that with the visitor restrictions, many of our patients are feeling isolated and anxious, and they also aren't able to receive personal items that their families or friends would normally bring them during their hospital stay. So we've developed a process that allows family members, friends, or other visitors to be able to drop off items and/or personal communication devices (iPads, cell phones, etc.) at the main entrance between 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. Our Protective Services team will help ensure these items are safely delivered to our patients.

**DONATIONS:** Situations like COVID-19, shine a spotlight on the generosity and support of our community. Several organizations, including restaurants and other vendors, have reached out to offer support to our associates and physicians by offering discounts and even delivering free food to some of our care sites.



To ensure the safety of our associates and to support the community with social distancing, we can no longer accept food donations to our hospitals or other OhioHealth locations. We are grateful for the support and want to encourage anyone in our community wishing to help to please consider supporting our associates in other ways such as financial support through the OhioHealth Associate Emergency Assistance Fund, supporting our PPE and medical supply donation centers (sites listed on [OhioHealth.com/Covid-19](https://www.ohiohealth.com/Covid-19)) and continuing to offer restaurant and other discounts which we will promote to our associates. Please direct inquiries for any donations, including financial support, to [Supplydonation@Ohiohealth.com](mailto:Supplydonation@Ohiohealth.com).

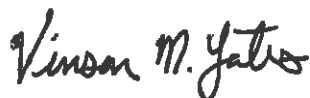
**VIRTUAL HEALTH: TELEPHONE VISITS:** Throughout our system, OhioHealth Physician Group (OPG) providers have “seen” more than 5,500 patients via telephone visit in the last week, averaging more than 900 telephone visits per business day. We anticipate video visits to go live next early week for both OPG primary care and specialty visits and OhioHealth Home Care. Interested in a virtual visit with your provider so you can stay home but still receive the care you need? Check to see if your provider is scheduling virtual appointments via MyChart.

**SURGE PLANNING:** Finally, I’d like to take a minute to share how we’re planning for a surge of patients with COVID-19 which is anticipated in the coming weeks. We’ve been working closely with our regional and community resources like Richland Public Health, our local Emergency Management Agency, Northeast Central Ohio (NECO) Regional Healthcare Coalition, and other hospitals in our area to ensure we can care for patients who need different levels of care. We’re working on surge planning locally, and in collaboration with the OhioHealth hospitals in central Ohio. We are transitioning beds here in Mansfield and Shelby to be able to care for COVID-19 patients, while keeping patients who are hospitalized because of other issues safely away from the virus, securing additional equipment, and working on staffing to be able to support higher levels of care on several of our units. Traditional referral patterns will continue for our regional and central Ohio care sites, but our intent is to keep care local so that patients are not unnecessarily transferred out of the area. You’ve likely heard about plans to use the Columbus Convention Center as an alternate site of care, and our colleagues in Columbus are working with the other Columbus-based healthcare systems to convert that facility to be able to care for approximately 1,000 non-critical COVID-19 patients, making more space for critically ill patients who need to be cared for in our hospitals in central Ohio. This resource will only be used if needed.

These are trying times, but I can assure you that the teams here at Mansfield Hospital and Shelby Hospital are working hard to ensure we’re ready to care for our community. I am so proud of our team – *every member of our team* – for their dedication, their innovation, their strength, their teamwork, and their relentless commitment to our patients and each other. As you might imagine, there are some members of our team who are feeling a bit anxious and some who are feeling fearful as we ramp up to be ready to care for these patients. This is scary stuff. But I assure you that our number one goal is keeping our people safe and informed about how to protect themselves, their families, and their patients. And we’re all working through this. Together.

I sincerely thank you for your collaboration, your donations, and your support as we continue our work. We’ll be in touch again next week with updates about our progress. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me at [Vinson.Yates@OhioHealth.com](mailto:Vinson.Yates@OhioHealth.com) with questions or suggestions.

Yours in good health,



Vinson M. Yates  
President, OhioHealth Mansfield and Shelby Hospitals