



March 5, 2020

To: Joint meeting of the House and Senate Health Care Committees

Re: COVID-19 preparedness

Chair Monnes Anderson, Chair Salinas, and Members of the House and Senate Health Care Committees,

For the record, my name is Renee Edwards and I am the chief medical officer of OHSU Health. Thank you for having me here today.

OHSU is prepared to care for patients arriving with respiratory illnesses, and efforts are underway to ensure ongoing preparedness to include the newly named COVID-19.

As Oregon's academic health center, OHSU is participating with state and local public health authorities and health systems across the metro area to coordinate a regional response to contain the spread of the virus.

Beginning with the initial reports of the novel coronavirus in January, OHSU has taken numerous steps to reduce the risk of the virus spreading:

- OHSU's emergency preparedness group has been working to adapt response plans in place from previous disease outbreaks. In addition, our team has conducted a simulated exercise to test emergency processes should there be an unprecedented increase in patients due to COVID-19.
- Since January, an internal task force has been meeting weekly to discuss supplies, logistics, emergency management and necessary measures to ensure the health of patients, visitors, students and employees.
- Patient access support specialists and health care unit coordinators are vigilantly conducting travel and symptom screening questions, and helping with appropriate triage and masking of symptomatic patients in our ambulatory or hospital units.
- Because OHSU's mission carries our scientists, students and clinicians around the world, we are also supporting employees who have traveled to locations with confirmed COVID-19 cases through measures including telework, paid administrative leave and

guiding them through quarantine procedures when necessary, as well as affected countries expand.

I want to specifically elaborate on our preparedness around supplies. In anticipation of the flu season, we bolstered our quantities of personal protective equipment, and we are currently adequately supplied. We are keeping a close eye on supply chain, and are working closely with state and regional public health agencies, as well as area health systems, to ensure supplies of masks, gowns, and eye protection meet the demand. We have taken appropriate measures to conserve respirators, and are prioritizing those for staff who are most likely to care for a person under investigation or patient confirmed with COVID-19.

The safety of every one of our dedicated employees is essential to contain this outbreak. We have adopted two types of criteria for monitoring and quarantine with employees, students and all members based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Those two types include criteria for active monitoring and criteria for self-monitoring with delegated supervision, which have been explicitly communicated to OHSU Healthcare Workforce Members.

OHSU is using every tool in our toolbox to ensure that we can be accessed by as many citizens of Oregon as possible.

Our telemedicine program offers individuals with flu-like symptoms the ability to connect with clinicians from home through a two-way video connection, increasing access for patients while protecting the safety of our employees and limiting potential exposure.

We are also partnering with the Oregon Health Authority to add capacity to the Oregon Poison Center hotline to ensure individuals with health questions related to COVID-19 can reach one of our highly trained staff members over the phone.

Thank you.

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