Volunteer Guidance: Restrictions and Resuming Volunteer Services

Updated June 11, 2020

Background

Volunteers are essential members of MercyOne and their safety is paramount under the current pandemic of COVID-19. Consistent with CDC guidance on social distancing in relation to COVID-19, on Friday, March 20, MercyOne and its locations suspended all volunteer activities, unless qualified as an extraordinary circumstance.

Volunteer services may now resume if a facility adheres to all of the following:

1. Has less than 100 active cases/100K in the county in which the MercyOne site is located
   a. See Trinity Dashboard for rates for Trinity markets
   b. See Incident Commander for rates for CommonSpirit markets
   c. If the county exceeds threshold, the facility must go back to full volunteer restrictions
2. Is equipped to provide all public-facing volunteers with procedural masks and all non-public facing (i.e. back office) volunteers with cloth face covers. Volunteers who are not public-facing may provide their own face cover, if desired. No exceptions for face covers. Volunteers must be able to cover their face to serve in the facility.
3. Provides training in donning/doffing of masks/face covers, hand hygiene, social distancing etc. Volunteers must observe and adhere to all requirements while serving in a MercyOne facility.
   a. Resources to assist with training: How to wear a face mask; Face mask guidelines poster, Prioritizing your health and safety video.
4. Excludes access to following areas for volunteers:
   a. COVID/PUI units and clinics
   b. ED
   c. ICU
   d. OB/L&D
   e. Pediatrics/NICU
   f. Specialty units (i.e. Oncology, Transplant, etc.)

If facilities are not able to meet the above criteria, then the facility must continue full volunteer restrictions, unless qualified as an extraordinary circumstance.

Volunteer Guidelines Under Extraordinary Circumstances

- All volunteers must adhere to safety guidelines and the use of PPE where needed
- No volunteer activities may include groups larger than five (5)
All volunteers must practice recommended social distancing

Examples of Acceptable Volunteer Activities Under Extraordinary Circumstances

- Clinical and non-clinical volunteers involved in the care and support of patients and colleagues
- Volunteer clinicians, nurses and other support staff that operate in acute care or safety net health centers
- Faith Community Nurses that can be deployed to support community and clinical efforts
- Volunteers that provide critical support services to vulnerable populations that would otherwise go without care (e.g. food distribution)

Eucharistic Ministers and Anointing of the Sick

- The practice of using volunteer Eucharistic Ministers is discontinued in all MercyOne sites immediately and for the duration of the COVID-19 period. Employed spiritual care staff/chaplains may distribute Communion. The practice of placing the Communion wafer on the tongue of the patient should not be used. Communion can be distributed directly into the hand of the patient.
- With respect to the Catholic sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, priests, preferably those on staff who are trained in universal precautions, can administer the Anointing of the Sick. Volunteer clergy visits are discouraged.