



Russell Meyers, CEO of Midland Health

COVID-19 Daily Briefing: Monday, April 20, 2020

Transcribed from a previously recorded live event.

Mr. Meyers: Good Morning. I'm Russell Meyers, CEO of Midland Health. And this is our Coronavirus daily update for Monday, April 20th. Starting with some numbers in Texas, we are just short of 19,000 cases now confirmed across the state. There have been 477 deaths so far according to the DSHS website. Midland County has 42 confirmed cases. There have been 3 deaths in our county. The hospital has had a significant uptick in testing after our team went to the Midland Medical Lodge on Friday and tested essentially everyone at that site. So, we've now tested more than 1,150 cases. We've had 50 positives-- some of those from outside of our county, 900 negatives, and we are waiting on results for over 200 patients now. Almost all of those from Thursday and Friday of last week. Hospital census is 109. We saw only 79 patients in the ED. And to give you a reference point, this same day last year in 2019 we saw 176 patients in the ER. So, 100+ fewer than last year; less than half last year's volume.

In the hospital, the CCU has 9 patients total. 7 of those are PUIs for COVID-19. We have 16 more of those patients in the Medical Surgical environment for a total of 23 PUIs. 6 of those are confirmed positive for COVID-19.

The big news last week was the governor's press conference on Friday and his announcement of 3 new executive orders. I'll tell you a little bit about each of those and their impact on the hospital. The first is the appointment of a strike force to get the economy moving again. The governor appointed a large group of both healthcare professionals, and business folks, and state representatives to his strike force with an intention of getting the economy and the state back up and moving as soon as possible. We expect to see that they'll be meeting on a fairly aggressive schedule and making recommendations to the governor. He did state that he expects to have some more announcements on the 27th which is a week from today and then more further into May. Our own Don Evans, a member of our board of governors, and former secretary of commerce, a very active and successful Midland businessperson is one of the members of the strike force. The second executive order was regarding retail-to-go. You can get the governor's orders on the state website. The retail-to-go concept essentially opens more stores beyond the original essential group, but gives them some pretty direct guidance on how to deal with their customers, encouraging them to keep customers out of the stores, to practice careful personal hygiene among the workforce, to deliver packages that are ordered either on-line or by phone to deliver those directly to customers' cars. So, a very slow movement into the re-opening of the retail world beginning immediately. And then the one that's of interest to us is the 3rd executive order allowing for enhancement of elective procedures, really for hospitals and surgery centers to return to doing elective procedures beginning on Wednesday. This order runs through May the 8th at which point I assume it will be re-evaluated. And the key change from the original restrictions is that it really opens the door to the performance of elective procedures in cases where they will not deplete the supply of PPE for a hospital and they will not deplete the inpatient bed capacity needed to manage COVID-19 patients should a further spike happen in the days ahead. We think those are important changes and we have begun serious conversation with all the procedural specialties that work in the hospital. And to the point that we were prepared to move forward with loosening our restrictions on elective procedures as soon as this week. Unfortunately last week's significant increase in cases, especially the outbreak at the



Midland Medical Lodge has caused us to slow that process just a bit. We will be re-evaluating where we stand as the test results come back early this week. You may recall that on Friday we sent a team to test all the patients and most of the staff at the Midland Medical Lodge. Those results are still pending. We hope that tomorrow, perhaps today, but no later than tomorrow we'll have the majority of those test results back. We'll use that to inform our decision making with regard to re-activating elective procedures. We hope that that can still take place in the next few days. Certainly, our surgeons and our GI doctors, and our cardiologists, and others need to get back to work. Their patients have been waiting, in many cases, for surgeries that could be postponed, but are still very much needed surgeries and other procedures. And of course, the hospital has serious financial concerns as those elective procedures are the economic engine that drives much of what we do. So, we have lots of reasons and lots of motivation to return to doing elective work. But we intend to be very thoughtful and careful about that and we will not allow it to jeopardize our ability to respond to the pandemic. From the beginning those conversations with our surgeons and others have included a plan to do a regular conference a couple of days a week at least among the procedure lists, and the anesthesia providers, and our nursing leadership, and hospital administration all the with the intention of assessing any risk that we might continue to run and adjusting the schedule in accordance with that risk. So, that's what's ahead of us. As I said, the governor's order runs through May the 8th at which point it would be re-evaluated. And we hope that later this week we will be able to tell you exactly what our plan is and when we expect to open the doors to a significantly greater number of elective procedures here at the hospital.

My last point today I'd like to talk a little bit about recognition for our unlicensed and our certified personal that do so much of the front-line care. Patient Care Assistants (PCA), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) throughout the hospital environment are important front-line caregivers delivering much of the hands-on care that every one of our patients requires. And I'm particularly reminded of the importance of CNAs as we deal with the outbreak in the nursing home environment and the potential risk that those environments run for the whole healthcare system. In a nursing home, a CNA is the front-line nursing provider. And there is no more important person right now involved in the chain of prevention than that CNA in a nursing home environment. So, I'd like to say thanks to all of those people working in our environment and all the nursing homes in our community. It's hard work. It's very, very vital work in the care and the service delivered to patients who need it and we can't thank those hard-working folks enough for the work that they do.

So, that's the extent of my remarks for today and I'll be happy to take questions.

Tasa Richardson, Midland Health Public Relations Manager: I'll give everybody a minute or 2 to ask questions, but we don't have—Oh, we just got one. Ok, from Facebook. It's regarding antibody testing. I keep seeing that COVID-19 antibody tests are the in works and they mention a blood test exhibiting IgA and IgG immunoglobulin antibodies. If they are testing for antibodies, how do they know if they are from a COVID-19 recovery and just the flu or even a flu shot?

Mr. Meyers: I'll let Dr. Wilson come and try to answer that, but I will tell you that we don't have any antibody testing available yet. If you are anticipating that you are going to be waiting for that for a while. Dr. Wilson.

Dr. Wilson: Thank you Russell. So, the antibody testing is for IgM and IgG. IgM is the initial response of the body to a virus and IgG is the long term memory cells if you will that will protect you for a longer period of time and the ones that we are trying to generate with the vaccination that we hope to have some time in the future to support us in the cure in the long term. In the short term the antibodies that you have are actually specific for the type of virus or the type of antigen if you will or the target spot on any cell whether that's bacterial or any viral. So, the antibodies that one might have for other viruses, even the other species of coronavirus that you have heard about and you'll remember we have spoken about before. There's about 4 species of coronavirus that are around that can cause just a common cold. The antibodies that treat that don't necessarily treat the SARS 2 virus, the one we're concerned about. So, you need specific antibodies for specific viruses.

Mr. Meyers: Ok, thank you Dr. Wilson. Other questions?

Tasa: We have a question from Mitch. Has the hospital heard from any nursing homes in Midland other than Midland Medical Lodge concerning the residents developing COVID-19 symptoms over the weekend?

Mr. Meyers: The short answer to that is no. I think we talked about this on Friday. We have been fairly aggressive in making contact with the nursing homes in our community and throughout the region encouraging them to stay in touch with us. Our case management team did that work last week and did a great job of getting around to everyone and has actually built a database of who the contacts are and what the situations are. And we will be updating that regularly. But so far Midland Medical Lodge is the primary area of concern.

Tasa: Sammi has a question. Sammi, go ahead.

Sammi Steele (Reporter for NewsWest 9): How many people from Midland Medical Lodge have tested positive who are not Midland County residents?

Mr. Meyers: Did you say how many who are not Midland County residents?

Sammi: Yes.

Mr. Meyers: I don't know the answer to that. But once you live at the Medical Lodge you are a resident in our community. So, it should be zero unless by chance it's a worker.

Sammi: Yeah, so I'm wondering if like staff or employees who maybe live in Ector County or in, you know another county if that changes the numbers.

Mr. Meyers: Sammi, I think that's probably information we can get, but I don't have it in front of me just now.

Sammi: Ok, that's alright. Thank you.

Tasa: Ok, we have a question from Caitlin from the MRT. Are there any more PUIs from Midland Medical Lodge who have been admitted to the hospital? And then I'll ask her second question in a minute.

Mr. Meyers: Admitted over the weekend I presume is what she means.



Tasa: Yes, sir.

Mr. Meyers: Yes, just 1. One over the weekend beyond the ones we already had. And we think there's one in the ED right now. So, there's been a handful. Yes.

Tasa: Her follow up question is: Are there more residents from Midland Medical Lodge who have been isolated at their facility?

Mr. Meyers: As I understand it, Midland Medical Lodge has an isolation wing and they are taking patients who show signs and symptoms that are suspicious for COVID-19 while they are awaiting testing results and managing those cases much like we've recommended that people do if they have signs and symptoms that are not sick enough to come to the hospital. They stay away from others, they practice careful personal hygiene, the staff practices careful PPE usage, etc. So, that unit is in place. They do have several patients on it is our understanding. And all of those patients have been tested. Most of them the results have not been returned just yet.

Tasa: That's all the questions we have.

Mr. Meyers: Ok. Well thank you all very much. We'll be back tomorrow with the Unified Command Team Briefing, same time. Thank you very much.