

Situation report for April 7, 2020.

Good afternoon, everyone.

As we respond to the COVID-19 national emergency, we continue providing the best possible healthcare to our national heroes. I want to recognize and thank all of the wonderful staff at the Northport VA Medical Center for a job well done. Their support to facility leadership and the veterans of Long Island has been exemplary, even as we are confronted with new challenges on a daily basis.

In seeing our employees continuously rise to the occasion, I cannot help but reflect upon how vital they are to our continued functionality during fragile circumstances created by this pandemic. Their dedication is the source of our strength, and the difference they are making cannot be overstated.

In this moment, I also want to offer my support and encouragement to our front-line staff. By working as a team and continuously supporting one another, they have overcome emotionally stressful and physically exhausting situations. It is my hope that we can all take a moment to reflect on the bravery of our healthcare staff and the countless acts of quiet heroism they perform each and every day.

Here is some feedback from veterans we have treated:

Respondent Comment

"Was rescheduled due to current crisis. No problem. Asked operator if I could get a refill on a hay fever spray she said she would let my provider know. Got a courtesy call from my provider Dr. Kim in the Patchogue office asking me how I was doing making sure it was hay fever and nothing else. Thought that was very nice of Dr. Kim under the circumstances due to this covid outbreak".

Respondent Comment

"I was at the Riverhead VA clinic during the Corona Virus crisis. The Receptionist was very nice and even during these trying times she showed me the respect and concern for my problem. Thank her very much! I wish I had gotten her name, to thank her properly".

Respondent Comment

"I had a Video Call that didn't work The Doctor called me on phone instead Thank you V.A. Team"

Respondent Comment

"Northport VAMC is the very best. I wouldn't be here if not for the whole team. All of you please be safe, we need you!!!"

I know it has not been easy. But, thanks to your commitment, dedication and great support, we are able to face this emergency. While each day is a new challenge, it is incredibly rewarding to serve our veterans during this time. The Executive Team will continue to working closely on all aspects of managing this emergency, and we will continue our 24/7 incident command operations to address any issues and challenges that may arise

Here are our latest numbers as of April 7, 2020:

Total patient tests collected: 153

Patients tested Negative: 54

Patients awaiting test results: 25

Patients with positive tests: 74

Based on their clinical statuses, veterans were either admitted to our inpatient unit or were discharged to their homes with instructions for home isolation and self-care, according to Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention guidelines. This week we were pleased when several patients were discharged very clinically stable after several days in the inpatient wards and some were previously very critically ill in intensive care unit.

This is the current operational status of the hospital and our community-based outpatient clinics:

- All qualifying appointments continue being transitioned to telephone or VA Video Connect.
- All visitation has been suspended. Only those with a valid appointment will be granted access to our facilities.
- All community clinics have been temporarily closed. However, most services are now being provided by telephone or telemedicine.

Rumor control:

- Does Northport has enough Protective Equipment?
 - Northport VAMC, like every facility across the nation, is actively managing its inventory of PPE. This ensures an adequate supply for situations where PPE is necessary to treat patients and safeguard the health of our workforce. Currently, there is a national shortage of different types of PPE, But, we have been able to work with our VISN 2 and Central Office Emergency Team to track and replenish our stocks. Coupled with strict mechanisms to control how and when PPE is used, we can ensure we will have PPE when it is needed.
- Why I have been temporarily deployed to another area or detailed to a different job function?
 - Because this is a declared National Emergency, we must continuously evaluate our operations to identify areas of greatest need. Where necessary, we are most able to rapidly address those needs by utilizing the knowledge and experience of our existing workforce. In any instance where an employee is detailed to a non-standard location or job function, all necessary training and support is provided to ensure their success. In national emergencies, healthcare professionals may be called to stand in the face of unique challenges, and our staff has been doing so admirably. Our hospital continues to support our patients' needs, and I want to thank my staff for being so flexible as we fulfill our obligations to our veterans.

Important instructions for veterans

- If you have a medical emergency:
 - Call 911
- If you have or need an appointment:
 - Call contact our call center at (631) 754-7978.
 - Ask to speak to your healthcare team to discuss your scheduling and telehealth options.
- If you are feeling sick:
 - Call your health care team to decide if you require an in-person visit.
 - Discuss what next steps are appropriate for your specific medical situation.
- If your appointment is critical and requires you to come to the hospital in Northport, but you do not have transportation, please contact our social work service at 631-261-4400, ext. 7030.
- If you have general questions:
 - Consult the special COVID-19 information page from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Or, visit the COVID-19 page from the VHA.

Important instructions for employees

- If you have a medical emergency:
 - Report to the emergency department.
- If you are feeling sick:
 - Immediately tell your supervisor.

- Dial the hospital's main switchboard at 1-631-261-4400 – even if inside the facility – and enter the special **FIVE-DIGIT** extension: **x80192**
- If you provide direct patient care:
 - Ensure to exercise proper hand washing and other protective measures.
 - Follow all guidance from the CDC and your supervisors.
 - Refrain from publicly discussing sensitive patient information, which is still a HIPAA violation.
 - Avoid wasting personal protective equipment in situations where it is not medically indicated.
- If you have general questions:
 - As always, elevate your questions to your supervisor and utilize the proper communications channels.
- If you or an employee you know is having a difficult time:
 - Please call or refer the employee to call the main social work office at x7030.

Important information resources

CDC COVID-19 Information

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

VA COVID-19 Information

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/>

Telehealth Information

- Telehealth How-To, and testing your device's compatibility for VA Video Connect
<https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect>
- One veteran's experience with Northport's telehealth program
https://www.facebook.com/pg/NorthportVAMC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=3173594676003553

Latest Northport COVID-19 Advisory Pamphlet

- See Attached

Stories and Photos From the Front Lines

- Housekeeping:
https://www.facebook.com/NorthportVAMC/posts/3333559646673721?_tn=-R
- Primary Care:
https://www.facebook.com/NorthportVAMC/posts/3324066107623075?_tn=-R
- Leadership and Management:
https://www.facebook.com/NorthportVAMC/posts/3331209456908740?_tn=-R

We will continue providing periodic updates as the situation evolves. I appreciate your commitment to our veterans during this time, and I thank you all for everything you do.

Sincerely,



Antonio Sanchez, MD, MHSA, FAPA, FACHE
Executive Director
Northport VA Medical Center