

# Public Health Emergency: WORKFORCE SAFETY & WELL-BEING

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The safety and well-being of our workforce during a public health emergency, such as a pandemic, is critical to our ability to provide care for our patients and communities. The workforce face stressful challenges of increased work intensity and uncertainty. The sources of anxiety include:

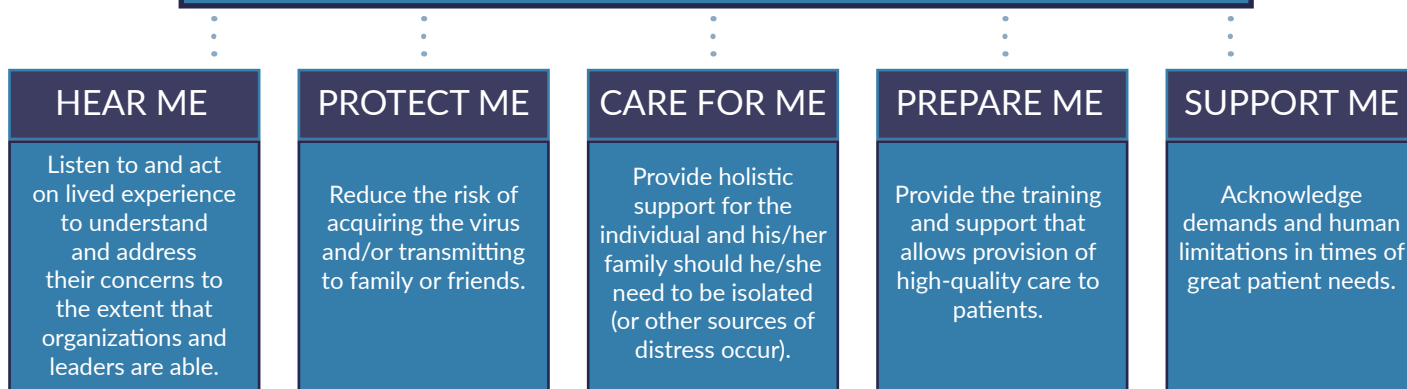
- Access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Exposure to COVID-19 at work and taking the infection home to their family
- Limited rapid access to testing if they develop symptoms and concomitant fear of propagating infection at work
- Uncertainty that their organization will support/take care of their personal and family needs if they develop infection
- Access to childcare during increased work hours and school closures
- Support for other personal and family needs as work hours and demands increase (food, hydration, lodging, transportation)
- Concern for competent medical care if deployed to a new area (i.e., non-ICU nurses having to function as ICU nurses)
- Lack of access to up-to-date information and communication

## ABOUT THIS TOOL

The Workforce Safety and Well-Being Tools were developed by the members of the Cynosure Hospital Quality Improvement Collaborative (HQIC) Public Health Emergency (PHE) Workgroup. The PHE Workgroup is comprised of experts currently working with and in hospitals and health care organizations across the United States. The PHE Affinity Group for Workforce Safety and Well-Being has researched and gathered best practices for organizations to assist in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Using contributions from subject matter experts, literature reviews, and the recent experience in health care organizations, these tools are intended to translate ideas into action by health care leaders, to support our workforce responding to the public health emergency. Leaders may use these tools as a menu of strategies, change ideas, and specific actionable items that can be implemented to better serve and support the health care workforce.

### Requests from Health Care Professionals to Their Organizations



# hospital LEADERS

To prepare and respond to disasters and public health emergencies, most hospitals have an emergency management plan and utilize a hospital incident command system (HICS) addressing command, operations, planning, logistics and finance/administration. Traditional plans have not included attending to the needs of the workforce in supporting their physical, emotional and psychosocial well-being. Over the long course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact has led to staff members feeling demoralized, traumatized, and unappreciated. This has led to resignations and has even led to suicide.

The Cynosure HQIC's Public Health Emergency (PHE) Workgroup and Affinity Group for Workforce Safety and Well-Being have identified best practice approaches and key steps for hospital leaders to support their workforce. This includes a set of approaches that hospitals can adopt or adapt to meet their organization's specific needs in addressing Hear Me, Protect Me, Care for Me, Prepare Me and Support Me.

## WHAT IS NEEDED FROM LEADERSHIP

The recommended aims for this work using the American Medical Association (AMA) Coping with COVID-19 for Caregivers survey<sup>4</sup> prompts are:

1. "The stress I experienced today is...",
  - Increase the percent responding "minimal" and "modest" by 20% by December 31, 2021
2. "I worry about exposing myself and my family to COVID,"
  - Increase the percent responding "not at all" and "somewhat" by 20% by December 31, 2021
  - These measures will allow leaders to measure the impact of the toolkit interventions.

## LEADERSHIP ROUNDING SUGGESTIONS:

### HEAR ME

- What are you most worried about right now?
- What concerns do you have for patients, yourself, your family, or the team?
- What can we do together that would help right now?
- How can we work together to make a positive change?
- What can we stop doing that would help right now?
- What else do you want us to know?

### CARE FOR ME

- What would support look like for you today?
- How are you feeling today? Emotionally?

### SUPPORT ME

- How are you?
- What do you need right now?
- What is a source of joy for you right now?

### PREPARE ME

- What else do you think you'll need today?
- We are trying some new ideas. What are your thoughts about how "X" is working?
- What questions do you have?

### PROTECT ME

- What decisions can we make together about how we manage the volume of patients we expect (or have) using the PPE available? Which of these ideas do you think we could test?
- Did you know we have testing available for you as you want/need it?
- Have you been able to obtain your vaccination? Can I schedule that for you?

# how to HEAR ME

Listen and act on your network of health care professionals' expert perspective and frontline experience; understand and address their concerns to the extent that the organization and leaders are able.

## ASK

Conduct frequent and brief WELL-BEING huddles/rounds to learn about current and pressing issues.

- What are you most worried about right now?
- What concerns do you have for patients, yourself, your family, or the team?
- What can we do together that would help right now?
- How can we work together to make a positive change?
- What can we stop doing that would help right now?
- What else do you want us to know?

## LISTEN, DO NOT INTERRUPT

**Acknowledge complex emotions**

- This is extremely difficult and no one has been through this before

**Recognize frustration and anger as part of the upheaval of daily life**

- Empathize and invite ideas to create change, co-design a solution
- Include staff members in decisions that affect them

**Promote psychological safety**

- Promote Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - not just for crises; rotational presence on-site (all shifts) as well as available off-site for privacy (scheduled)
- "Never worry alone," to promote peer-to-peer support
- Create a psychologically safe place to share feelings

**Encourage sharing positive stories**

- Dedicated bulletin board or webpage for staff members, patients, families and the community to post and share positive stories
- Ask "What is the best thing that happened today?"

**Provide quiet restorative space for sharing and reflecting**

- Music therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Hydration/snacks

# how to PROTECT ME

Reduce the risk of acquiring the virus and/or transmitting to family or friends.

## PPE

- Provide essential PPE to all staff members and alternatives to N95s in COVID-19 unit(s)
- Consider PAPRs (powered air purifying respirators)
- Consider hospital issued scrubs for staff members in COVID-19 units

## Be Fact-Based & Transparent with all Communications

- Distribute essential information daily (i.e., PPE supply, medications, immunization priority/schedule, etc.)
- Communicate essential information in daily huddles. Be fact-based.
- Create a daily dashboard that includes:
  - Days of PPE on hand, COVID-19 confirmed patient volume, immunization and other essential information (see example)
- Schedule “town hall” meetings (discipline specific), provide updates and answer questions
- Create an intranet (or website) page just for staff members to easily access resources
  - List all services and support offered with links for more information

## Use Leadership Rounding to:

- Gather concerns ideas, suggestions to support safety
  - What decisions can we make together about how we manage the volume of patients we expect (or have) using the PPE available?
  - Which of these ideas do you think we could test?
  - Have you been able to obtain your vaccination? Can I schedule that for you?
- Reassure and inform – provide essential daily information
  - We have “X” days’ supply of PPE on hand and our next shipment is...
  - Here’s what we’ve learned from other hospitals/organizations/states...
  - Immunizations are strongly advised, here is what you need to know...
  - Steps to protect your family before you go home are...
- Provide opportunity for 2-way communication
- Encourage immunization
- Share gratitude

## Strongly Encourage Immunization

- Provide fact-based information
- Make immunization easy
- Use workforce influencers to encourage immunization
  - Photos of them being immunized and testimonial why it is important, podcast or video recorded messages from staff/physicians
- Create an immunization registry (workforce registry, patients-using your EHR)

# how to CARE FOR ME

Provide holistic support for the individual and their family should they need to be isolated (or other sources of distress occur).

**Create an intranet (or website) page for staff members to easily access resources.**

- List all services and support offered with links for more information, such as:

## FOOD/MEALS

- Food trucks - sponsored by the hospital or other groups on a rotational basis
- Meals - sponsored by the hospital or other groups on a rotational basis
- Easy access to snacks, beverages for breaks
- Meals-to-go - allow staff members to pre-order and purchase meals they can take home to family
- Food delivery services - vouchers and/or discounts (DoorDash, Uber Eats, etc.)
- Leadership rounding with snack carts

## TRANSPORTATION

- Hospital shuttle
- Taxi, Uber/Lyft vouchers or discounts

## LODGING

- Arrange for lodging for those staff who are quarantined or fearful of going home and potentially infecting loved ones
- Provide vouchers or discounts for lodging

## CHILDCARE, ELDER CARE, PET CARE

- Make services available
- Provide discounts, coupons/vouchers

**To help defray hospital expenses, engage others to support these services.**

- Community (e.g., patient-family advisors, civic leaders/organizations, churches, service organizations, schools/school clubs, universities)
- Partners and suppliers
- Physician groups
- Non-profits
- Foundations, philanthropies
- Start a Go-Fund-Me or similar mechanism to raise funds

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- Calm or other relaxation apps: paid or discounted subscriptions
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselors on site (schedule); ease of access
- Peer support
- Leader support - training to recognize early signals, red flags; process for intervention
- Create quiet space for breaks and respite (close to units)

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION/RESOURCES AND HOW TO NAVIGATE

- Financial information - if they or a family member is furloughed  
Financial assistance
- Unemployment
- Emergency relief support for staff members
- PTO donations from staff members

## LEADERSHIP ROUNDING QUESTIONS

- What would support look like for you today?
- How are you feeling today? Emotionally?

# how to PREPARE ME

Provide workforce training and support to promote high quality care in different settings.

## Be honest and clear

Acknowledge it is difficult to take a new role and to work in a different area

- Explain the training process and support that is provided
- Check-in with staff members regularly to see how they are doing
- Explain any changes in treatment or new approaches that are being tested; ask for feedback
- Share positive stories and experiences

## Encourage rapid tests of change and learning with in-person training

Provide the source of information for changes in scope, such as program flexibility, staffing flexibility and waivers that are permitted by state and county regulations.

- Reference lessons learned at the individual level, hospital-wide, and at other organizations
- Incorporate online learning modules, as applicable

## Communicate via real time methods

- Use team huddles at designated intervals (e.g., twice per day, change of shift, or more often if needed)
- Conduct leader rounding using recommended prompts and questions
- Use the rounding suggestions in the 'Hospital Leader' tool

## Provide safety nets for staff members

Try instant messaging or video conferencing to share information and updates with staff members

- Use team nursing
  - Staff members providing care and support within their scope
- Assign staff members to other areas and roles within the scope of their licensure/certification just-in-time
  - Utilize just in time training, competency checklists; shadow other staff
  - Use "battle buddies", "helping hands"
  - Provide visual reminders, images to support process
- Ensure educators and/or managers are rounding on their units to support staff members

# how to SUPPORT ME

Provide support that acknowledges human limitations in a time of extreme work hours, uncertainty and intensity.

## Be honest and clear

- Provide a daily prayer, reflection or inspirational message (overhead announcement, with daily report, or huddle and leader rounds)
- “Mindful Moment” phone line to ponder a positive moment every day
- Leader rounding questions:
  - How are you? Then, listen.
  - What do you need right now?
  - How are you maintaining work life balance?

## Use statements to connect to the caregiver’s individual values and sense of purpose

- Provide reassurance and support
- Link individual values to caring for patients
- Convey meaningfulness of the work

## Provide emotional and psychological support

- Create a Hope tree - where staff members can hang a tag that lists a hope, dream, or fear
- Use a tool or app to provide short, quick messages and links to tools/strategies to promote well-being
- Soul café - bring a cart with snacks and beverages to the unit/department, play upbeat music
  - Promote EAP - not just for crisis; rotational presence on-site (all shifts) as well as available off-site for privacy (scheduled)
- “Snuggles at work” - partner with humane society or therapy dog owners to offer staff member time with animals

## Express gratitude; promote and praise teamwork

- Curate and create videos from patients, families, patient-family advisors, community members expressing gratitude for staff members (share with staff members via email, hospital intranet/ website or display in departments)
- Include a daily message of gratitude in daily reports, huddles, leader rounding

## Support systems to ease burden (IT, EHR, Engineering)

- Provide prompt response, support and solutions to ease staff member burden with technology, mechanical or environmental issues
- Ensure supply carts are stocked
- Allow staff members from departments that are low volume to be “helping hands”

# hospital DASHBOARD

The dashboard below was created for you to customize to the needs of your hospital. Use this as a tool to establish best practices in your hospital or organization to improve the safety and well-being of your workforce.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS YOUR CUSTOMIZABLE DASHBOARD](#)

[Hospital Name]  
COVID-19 Update - [Date]

Daily Message
[gratitude, well-being]

PPE Inventory Status				
Type	QTY on hand	Daily Consumption	Days in Stock	Next delivery expected
N95 masks				
Procedure masks				
Masks with shield				
Gloves (boxes)				
PAPR shields				
Eye Shields				
Isolation gowns				

Census as of [HH:MM]	ED	Total INPT	ICU
Census			
Confirmed positive			
PUI (persons under investigation)			
# Discharged home yesterday			

Immunization Inventory		
Type	Doses available	Next delivery expected
[vaccine brand]	#	xx/xx/xx
[immunization message/additional information here]		



# RESOURCES

## PROTECT ME:

- [Get Us PPE](#)
- [Hearts 2 Heroes](#)
- [Angel Flight Distribution:](#)
  - [Heart4Heros Corona Country](#)
  - [Building Vaccine Confidence, Acceptance and Advocacy among Health Care Workers](#)

Examples of hospital websites directed to their workforce:

- [Mount Sinai](#)
- [University of Chicago](#)

## CARE FOR ME:

- [Clinician Well-Being Strategies During COVID-19](#)

Examples of hospital websites directed to their workforce:

- [Mount Sinai](#)
- [University of Chicago](#)

## PREPARE ME:

- [COVID-19 Pulmonary, ARDS and Ventilator Resources](#)
- [AACCN Coronavirus Resources](#)
- [Team Nursing and COVID-19 Surge Staffing \(including checklists\)](#)
- [HELP! I'm Being Asked to Work in the ICU! \(Cross Training in the ICU-Blog\)](#)

## SUPPORT ME:

- Gratitude:
  - [PFCCpartners Patient Family Advisors](#)
  - [Brazos Valley Tribute to Frontline Heroes during COVID-19](#)
- [CALM](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Snuggles Therapy/Therapy Dog](#)

## VIDEO RESOURCES & TESTIMONIALS

Click on the buttons below to access these video tools.

ME TOOLS  
OVERVIEW  
VIDEO

HEAR ME  
TESTIMONIALS

PROTECT/  
PREPARE ME  
TESTIMONIALS

CARE FOR ME  
TESTIMONIALS

SUPPORT ME  
TESTIMONIALS

LEADER  
TESTIMONIALS

# REFERENCES

1. Balik B, Hilton K, White K. Conversation and Action Guide to Support Staff Well-Being and Joy in Work During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic. Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2020. <http://www.ihio.org/resources/Pages/Tools/Conversation-Guide-to-Support-Staff-Wellbeing-Joy-in-Work-COVID-19.aspx>
2. Shanafelt T, Ripp J, Trockel M. Understanding and Addressing Sources of Anxiety Among Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic. JAMA. 2020;323(21):2133-2134.
3. Shanafelt T, Ripp J, Trockel M. Caring for health care workers during crisis: Creating a resilient organization. AMA; 2020. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-05/caring-for-health-care-workers-covid-19.pdf>

## MEASUREMENT

4. Coping with COVID-19 for Caregivers: Monitor the well-being of your physicians and care teams during COVID-19. American Medical Association. <https://clinician.health/>