

March 13, 2020

Dear CRONA Nurses,

We face a health crisis unlike anything most of us have ever seen. Your CRONA leadership is working constantly to advocate for all CRONA Nurses. Throughout the week we met multiple times with the administration of both hospitals to address your concerns about staff safety, patient care, crisis management, and pay issues.

Protecting CRONA Nurses. CRONA's first priority is to advocate for the health and safety of every CRONA Nurse. Where we have identified issues with policy, procedures, and provision of PPE to staff, we have immediately escalated those issues to hospital leadership. PPE supplies are an issue for our hospitals, just like at every other hospital, but if staff who need PPE according to CDC and Department of Health guidelines are denied it by management, please notify CRONA right away. The hospitals have committed to providing PPE to all staff who should have it according to the CDC. The CDC is providing direction to all hospitals and CRONA has been in frequent communication with the hospitals about how they are following and implementing those directions.

Answering your questions and concerns. Many nurses have contacted CRONA with their concerns and questions. As we receive your concerns and questions, we are presenting them to the hospitals. We are meeting with the hospitals daily, and sometimes more frequently. Today, the hospitals updated their COVID-19 FAQ. Answers to some of your questions can now be found in the updated FAQ. Where our questions have not been answered, we are working to get answers and to have the FAQ further updated. Questions about school closures, pay for nurses placed on self-isolation by Occupational Health, attendance, and more are answered in the FAQ. **The FAQ can be found by going to the intranet home page and clicking on the COVID-19 update;** the FAQ is listed near the top of the list of updates. Please note: we are not attaching a copy of the hospitals' FAQ because it is being updated so frequently.

Expected updates from Santa Clara County Health Department and screening practices. We are expecting new updates on changes in practice from the Santa Clara County Health Department and as those changes are sent to the hospitals, they will be disseminated to employees. Most entrances to both Stanford and Packard hospitals were closed today and screening protocols for patients and visitors implemented. Expect additional screening of both staff and patients/visitors. Plans are in progress to expand Occupational Health staffing and hours to ensure better service for hospital employees. Drive-through COVID-19 testing is being implemented to reduce potentially infected patients coming into buildings.

Requesting accommodations. Nurses who have health issues (for example, because they are immunocompromised, pregnant, or have cardiovascular or respiratory concerns) and feel they need to be excused from caring for COVID-19 patients must notify Occupational Health and request accommodation. To start the process, Nurses should contact Occupational Health and will then likely need to obtain a doctor's note. Nurses may be asked for additional information or to complete paperwork. If an accommodation is denied, Nurses may want to explore other options, including a leave of absence. We want to hear from you if you request an accommodation and are denied.

We can help each other. If there is a nurse on your unit asking to not take an assignment because of a co-morbidity, and you are able and willing to help, consider offering to help. Helping each other is a part of what makes CRONA Nurses strong and united.

CRONA Nurses are ready to help. Many of you have asked whether you can volunteer to work in areas where there is additional need, such as the drive-through testing or patient screening. We have asked the hospitals to provide this information. We are also pressing the hospitals to coordinate staffing across each organization in order to ensure that all nurses who are not needed on their own units will be offered work in areas where there are assignments that the nurse is competent to perform or may be willing to cross-train. As of today, many elective surgeries at both hospitals were cancelled and procedural area nurses have not been given clear directions. We have raised this issue with hospital management and urged the hospitals to facilitate cross-training of those nurses who volunteer to work in areas that are understaffed. We want to hear from you if you are cancelled or told there is not alternate work available. On the other hand, we also want to hear from you if you are asked to take an assignment you do not believe you are competent to perform.

Supporting Nurses and our families. We know that some areas have sick calls and we anticipate there may be further absences due to child care issues following school closures. We are encouraging the hospitals to address issues of child care proactively and to reach out to local government and community organizations for assistance. We also know nurses need to continue to receive pay if they are not able to work. We want to hear from you if you are cancelled ahead of a traveler. And we have urged the hospitals to provide paid administrative leave to nurses whose work is canceled as a result of the crisis.

We know that many demands will be made of CRONA Nurses over the coming days, weeks and months, and we will stand strong together. Communication is key to our success. So let us know what's happening in your units. Send us your questions and concerns. And look out for one another.

#CRONAStrong