

COVID-19

A message from Ballad Health Corporate
Emergency Operations Center (CEOC)



CEOC Weekly briefing

TO: Appalachian Highlands community and civic leaders

FROM: Ballad Health Corporate Emergency Operations Center

DATE: May 6, 2020

TITLE: Weekly COVID-19 briefing – May 6, 2020

ACTION: Please share with your communities. This is a review of the major activities that occurred this week related to the COVID-19 response.

Ballad Health announces third-quarter results

Today Ballad Health announced third-quarter results from its 2020 fiscal year. Excluding the impact of COVID-19, the results demonstrate significant reductions in the cost of healthcare; substantially higher quality, now showing top-decile performance in certain measures; and improved patient satisfaction.

“Prior to the impact of COVID-19, and despite the major challenges facing rural health systems, Ballad Health was contributing to major reductions in the cost of healthcare for our region, while also showing that lower costs can also lead to better quality and satisfaction,” said Ballad Health Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Alan Levine.

“Ballad Health has been recognized by the largest payers in America for its success in value-based care, and I’m proud of our more than 15,000 team members and physicians who work every day to deliver that result.”

Ballad Health’s latest quality measures, which reflect the period before the COVID-19 impact, show 13 of the 17 targeted quality measures prioritized by the State of Tennessee and federal government have improved, relative to the period prior to the merger creating Ballad Health. Among these measures, Ballad Health is now performing among the top 10% of hospitals in the nation in five of the measures.

To learn more about Ballad Health’s quality results, patient satisfaction and financial results for the quarter ending March 31, 2020, please [click here](#).

Ballad Health resumes elective, non-emergent surgeries

After temporarily postponing all elective, non-emergent surgeries, Ballad Health resumed these procedures on Monday, May 4. Our surgical teams and physician partners have worked admirably to

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rebuild our volumes and ensure safe, efficient care; however, we have recognized several areas for improvement and opportunities to improve our services.

COVID-19 testing

All outpatient and elective procedures with a one-night stay will need to be scheduled five days beforehand to allow enough time for the patient to be tested for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Nurse Connect will communicate directly with the patient before surgery to schedule their testing at a Ballad Health drive-thru site. A five-day lead time allows us to preserve our rapid tests for those who most need them.

Watch today's livestreamed press conference

We're hosting Facebook LIVE videos every Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. for local media and our communities. This is your chance to hear updated communication and information about COVID-19.

Miss today's video? [You can watch it here.](#)

Lodging and accommodation guidelines

To assist businesses in taking appropriate precautions for COVID-19, the State of Tennessee has developed industry-specific safeguarding protocols with the input of private sector working groups in partnership with the Economic Recovery Group.

The state recommends lodging and accommodation establishments implement an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees.

Business process adaptations

- Establish enhanced cleaning protocols that follow CDC/OSHA guidelines, particularly for common areas, high traffic areas and high-touch surfaces.
- Place hand sanitizer locations in high-traffic areas.
- Consider and adopt appropriate measures, if possible, to increase ventilation in common areas during heavy guest traffic.
- Use plastic shields or barriers between customers and employees at service counters.
- When possible, limit hotel car services or other direct personal services.
- For hotel dining facilities: follow [Restaurant Guidelines issued by the Economic Recovery Group](#).
- Modify check-in/check-out processes to observe social distancing and implement sanitization measures.
- Limit elevator capacity to four individuals at a time if possible, and encourage use of stairs.

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- Close all unstaffed gyms – see [full Exercise Facilities guidelines](#).
 - Note: Exercise Facility guidelines provide for “closing all swimming pools, hot tubs, saunas and other recreational water or spa facilities” and “showers, locker rooms, and lockers until further notice.”
- Ensure that any spa or salon services on the premises follow guidelines for [close contact personal services](#).
- Use appropriate temperatures for washers and dryers to ensure thorough sanitization of linens, etc.

[The full guidelines, as part of the Tennessee Pledge, can be downloaded here.](#)

Marsh Regional issues urgent call for donations

Marsh Regional Blood Center is experiencing an urgent need for blood donations, and we encourage all eligible donors to come out and give.

While we experienced a much-appreciated surge of donations at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve recently been faced with additional challenges that have strained our blood supplies, including a drastic reduction in mobile blood drives; concerns about COVID-19, which keep donors from visiting our centers; and the resumption of elective surgeries throughout Ballad Health.

COVID-19 does not pose any known risk to blood donors during the donation process or by attending blood drives. Marsh Regional always takes steps to prevent team members and donors who are not feeling well or who have a fever from reaching the donor area, and they are now taking additional social distancing precautions wherever possible. Plus, Marsh Regional continues to take appropriate measures to reduce donors’ potential exposure to COVID-19, as well as extra disinfection and sanitization efforts.

Blood donation is currently by appointment only. To make an appointment, please call 423-408-7500. If you’re healthy, feel well and have not been exposed to COVID-19, we encourage you to come out and give.

Mission Moment: Lakeysha serves where there is a need

When Ballad Health began looking for nurses to work in the COVID-19 unit at Johnson City Medical Center, Lakeysha was one of the first to volunteer.

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For six years, Lakeysha worked in the stroke unit at Johnson City Medical Center – that is, until she was asked if she would be willing to transfer to the unit where all suspected patients of COVID-19 are being treated.

“I just felt like it’s my duty. It’s my calling,” she said. “I want to be able to help provide relief, and I want to get that experience of what it means to take care of a community when bad things happen.”

Lakeysha also wanted to try to protect nurses who might be pregnant or caring for an elderly family member from having to work in the COVID-19 unit.

As far as working in the COVID-19 unit, she has to dress head to toe in personal protective equipment, and to help preserve Ballad Health’s inventory of protective equipment, Lakeysha and other COVID-19 nurses’ complete tasks inside the patient rooms that are usually done by other personnel.



“We do all the things in there. We’re assessing the patient. We’re swabbing the patient. We’re drawing blood, getting vitals and doing EKGs. We wipe down the rooms, clean the rooms and take out the trash. We do everything,” she said.

All in all, Lakeysha said the COVID-19 unit has been a good challenge for her and her peers.

“I feel like my nursing skills have definitely been sharpened and honed. I feel like I have a ton more confidence, and I’ve learned so much. It’s just a privilege and an honor to be there for people during a time like this,” she said.

“The staff in the COVID-19 unit has been amazing, and the manager has been awesome. Some people are terrified to come down there, so they really are appreciative of those who are working it. I’m not the only one down there. It’s a team effort. We’re all in this together.”

Do you have a story or team member you’d like to recognize? Let us know by sending an email to MyStory@balladhealth.org.

Additional points to note

- The next livestreamed media update will be Wednesday, May 13, at 11:30 a.m. You can watch live on Ballad Health’s Facebook page, and a link will be available that afternoon.

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- Community members who would like to be tested for COVID-19 should call our Nurse Connect hotline at 833-822-5523.
- COVID-19 updates, testing information and news continues to be posted to www.balladhealth.org/COVID19.

Total positive COVID-19 case count by county:

Please note: The process that compiles COVID-19 case information for the Commonwealth of Virginia has experienced an error that caused complete case information to be unavailable today – the below data reflects totals from May 5. Department of Health staff are working to resolve the issue.

Tennessee – 13,938 total (13,571 on May 4)

County	Total	Recovered	New cases
Carter	16	13	2
Cocke	15	16	-
Greene	43	39	-
Hamblen	19	16	-
Hawkins	31	28	-
Johnson	7	3	2
Sullivan	52	46	-
Unicoi	2	1	-
Washington	59	49	-
Totals	244	211	4

Virginia – 20,256 total (19,492 on May 4)

County	Total	New cases
Buchanan	16	-
City of Bristol	2	-
Grayson	5	1
Lee	10	-
City of Norton	2	-
Russell	5	-
Scott	7	-
Smyth	13	-

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Tazewell	6	-
Washington	40	1
Wise	22	-
Wythe	12	-
Totals	140	2

COVID-19 case counts are provided by the states' health departments. Data on recovered COVID-19 patients is not available for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In case you missed it, follow the links below to learn more...

- [Data shows Ballad Health continues delivering higher quality of care](#)
- [Diagnostic imaging procedures resumed on May 4](#)

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