

University Senate Report February, 2021

COVID-19 & Stony Brook University Hospital

SBUH currently has ~180 patients with a full ~620 census of patients; admitting 15-25 patients per day, discharging slightly more per day. Patients are slightly less ill, as reflected by a lower overall mortality, lower incidence of requirement for intubation and mechanical ventilation. Staffing has been managed by redeploying our current staff and faculty, and by reducing but not eliminating our elective admissions to surgery and cardiac catheterization. Recently we have also been able to secure the services of “traveler nurses”, to help out. By comparison to our SUNY colleagues, we are now seeing at least 2X more COVID19 patients than any other SUNY healthcare school/hospital.

Vaccinations for level Ia individuals is nearly complete; nearly all front line healthcare workers at SBM have been vaccinated at least once, with second doses in the freezer. We are seeking out the level Ia individuals who are not coming forward to be sure that is a choice and not yet being informed. Additional doses of vaccine in possession of SBUH are now being directed by the state to be used for individuals over age 65.

SBUH personnel are staffing the vaccine POD on the R&D park, although all appointments and vaccine distribution to the POD is being managed by NYS DOH, so all of our level Ib faculty and staff and students: please keep that in mind if you are having difficulty in getting an appointment to be vaccinated.

Finally, let me use this occasion to remind those SBU individuals who are hesitant to be vaccinated, for fear of side effects, short term or long term, that with virtually every other vaccine now available, short and long term side effects are rare, but when they occur, they always appear within 6 weeks of vaccination. This observation should negate any concerns that there has not been long enough follow up to be sure there are not significant long term side effects. Moreover, please know that in the clinical trials involving over 75,000 people who received one of the five vaccines currently under EUA (emergency use authorization) or in final phases of testing, not a single person has died of COVID-19, and freedom from illness has ranged from 70-95%, 94-95% for the two vaccines that we have been using for the past many weeks.

Renaissance School of Medicine

As of today, Dr. Kaushansky has stepped down as Dean of RSOM, and Dr. Bill Wertheim, Vice Dean for Graduate Medical Education, has been appointed Interim Dean. Dr. Kaushansky will remain as Senior Vice President for Health Sciences until June 30.

The curriculum committee heard a report on a holistic review of the 4 year medical school curriculum, many aspects of which were compared to all the other medical schools in the country. While there remain a few minor curricular adjustments that need be made, many of which were suggested by the students, overall the curriculum committee heard a very positive report. Of note, our “translational pillars”, in which the basic biology of clinical presentations are interspersed in the later stages of the curriculum, so that the biology is discussed after the student has seen a patient with the relevant clinical condition, and which is a successful innovation, is essentially a unique approach to medical education.

School of Nursing

At present with demand for positions in essentially all programs at an all time high, approximately 20% higher than usual, clinical placements are challenging, because outlying hospitals who had previously welcomed our students, have shut their doors. SBUH is working to accommodate not only our students, but also students from Suffolk County Community College and other SUNY programs. In order to grow our outstanding school (e.g. the remote NP program again was ranked in the top 10 nationally), in order to fill the need for outstanding healthcare staff, we will need additional faculty, additional space and additional clinical experiential opportunities will be needed.

School of Health Technology and Management

Very similar issues have arisen for the School as for the SoN. Outstanding educational programs have seen a substantial rise in applicants, and yet we are “land locked” because of educational space and experiential learning sites.

School of Social Welfare

The national search for a new dean for the school continues, with excellent candidates identified.