

This week's message is very emotional for me to write. I lost my mother earlier this week after a short, but serious illness. She was hospitalized in a well-known and respected facility in the greater Tampa area. As a Healthcare CEO, I take a critical look at things in and around any facility I am in. Watching to see if the staff washes their hands or changes gloves after every encounter or respects the privacy of the patient and their families as appropriate. I also look closely at their quality scores from various sources. As luck would have it, while I was there with my mom, this facility celebrated 200 days with no CAUTI (Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infection), which is one of the most common of the hospital acquired infections. Hospital Acquired Infections are responsible for over 100,000 deaths each year and as such every facility has a focus on preventing these conditions. As I was staying with mom one night overnight in the ICU, the night nurse shared their good news with me during one of her rounds to check on my mother. She was so very proud of their accomplishment. I told her that was indeed a great feat and then I shared that my hospital, Troy Regional, was celebrating 3000 days without a CAUTI this week. My dear mother, who was totally unresponsive, grunted at that moment as if to voice her approval and pride in our community hospital. I share this story to say that we have an outstanding asset in our community in Troy Regional. Not only do we have our world-renowned Troy University, great commercial and retail spaces and a quality of life that is second to none, but we have so much to proud of with our healthcare and local community hospital.

We are seeing a dramatic rise in the presence of the Covid-19 virus again in Alabama. This week, Alabama saw 1802 admitted patients with 523 in the Critical Care. We still have the lowest percentage of vaccinations in the country and unfortunately, Pike County is one of the lowest in the state. Intensive Care Units across the state, southeast region, and the nation, are becoming inundated with positive admissions. The same is true here at Troy Regional. Earlier this week we saw positivity rates range from 22%-38% in the daily testing we continue to perform. On Wednesday of this week, Alabama added 3,399 new Covid-19 cases and had a positivity rate of 22.9%, the highest in the nation. In neighboring Florida, over 11,515 people were hospitalized with Covid, the highest day since the beginning of the pandemic. Over 2400 people were in the ICU. The numbers are going the wrong way!

Vaccinations are still available here at Troy Regional and other locations in the area and we certainly encourage all our residents to become vaccinated. While it is true that some who are vaccinated have tested positive for Covid-19 recently, the effects of the virus are far less severe than those who are unvaccinated. Experts continue to report that over 99% of the deaths are in unvaccinated people and over 97% of those hospitalized are unvaccinated.

Remember, if it weren't for vaccines from our past, we would still be dealing with and losing people to polio and smallpox.

Let's all do our part to stop the spread of the virus in our community.

Spread the word, not the virus.

Rick E. Smith, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer
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