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Salem Medical Center integral part of NJ Department of Health plan to increase capacity for COVID-19 patients

Salem Medical Center, in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Health, is planning for an expected surge in COVID-19 patients by retrofitting existing rooms and creating new hospital beds especially equipped to handle COVID-19.

NJ Governor Phil Murphy and State Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli instructed hospitals and health systems across the state to look at all measures that could help absorb a surge of COVID-19 patients.

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New Jersey Assemblyman John J. Burzichelli (3rd District) commended Salem Medical Center for being at the forefront of discussions with the NJ Department of Health. “It is a proud moment for the community when we see our local hospital step up and work with the State to help be part of the solution for this unprecedented crisis,” said Burzichelli, Deputy Speaker, New Jersey General Assembly. “My heartfelt thanks go out to Salem Medical Center’s physicians and nurses, who are serving on the front lines, as well as its Board and Administration, for their commitment to the health and safety of Salem County and for New Jersey.”

Working closely with NJ State representatives since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, SMC has sought to find ways to support the State’s efforts. “We understood the gravity of the situation,” said Chief Executive Officer Dr. Tammy Torres.

Accordingly, the entire third and fourth floors of Salem Medical Center are currently undergoing renovation, each room being equipped with Telemetry and outfitted for Negative Air Pressure; when completed in mid-April, SMC will deliver 58 new beds to service the demands of COVID-19 patients.

“Essentially, we are converting general medical-surgical beds into ICU beds capable of handling an influx of COVID-19 patients. These improvements are moving at a rapid pace,” said Torres. “The timing of this work is critical, as southern New Jersey is expected to see a spike in demand for hospital beds over the next 15 days. This additional capacity will provide extra beds, supplies and staff to Salem County residents and to the southern region.”

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“By joining forces with the State, we are able to put as many resources as possible at the disposal of our frontline healthcare providers during this growing crisis,” said SMC Chairman of the Board William J. Colgan. “Time is of the essence to stay ahead of the surge, and we will continue working closely with the State and others to ensure area residents can get the care they need. None of this would be possible without the tireless and dedicated efforts of the Hospital’s medical staff, nursing staff, general staff and administration, to whom we are all extremely grateful.”

Salem Medical Center will continue to work closely with the New Jersey Department of Health, and with all regulatory agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and the Salem County Health Department, to coordinate an effective and timely local response to the ongoing crisis.

About Salem Medical Center:

With a mission of delivering high quality, compassionate healthcare to Greater Salem County, SMC transitioned to new ownership on February 1, 2019 and returned to not-for-profit status. SMC is licensed for 75 medical-surgical beds, 30 long term care beds, 26 psychiatric beds, and 12 critical care beds. SMC provides critical access for the community through its Emergency Department (nearly 20,000 patients annually), Surgery (outpatient/inpatient about 2,000 cases annually) and Inpatient Acute Care (about 2,000 admissions annually). SMC has more than 200 physicians on staff. In addition, SMC is dedicated to growing new services and recruiting physicians relevant to our community and focused on making SMC the healthcare destination of choice for Salem County and the surrounding area.