COVID Surge Emergency Medical Response

Once the ICU (UT1), UT3, and PACU (ICU overflow) become COVID positive biocontained areas (all positive COVID patients in negative pressure), the response for a medical emergency (rapid response) and medical emergency – cardiac arrest (code blue) will require the following changes documented below.

Medical Emergency/Rapid Response

- Please limit rapid response activations if at all possible. Patients should be proactively transferred to a higher level of care if at risk for decompensation.
- Each unit has 2 medicine teams assigned. Please work with the assigned team to manage any medical issues that would normally warrant a rapid response.
- If a patient requires assistance beyond what the medical team can provide, or a patient is exhibiting signs of respiratory distress, please activate a medical emergency – cardiac arrest (code blue) call.

Medical Emergency – Cardiac Arrest/Code Blue

- If the patient is a known COVID positive patient – please call 7777 and notify the operator that you are calling a code blue COVID alert.
- All other patients (includes COVID PUI and patients with prior negative COVID testing) – please call 7777 and notify the operator that you are calling a code blue/medical emergency – cardiac arrest. Do not notify the operator of COVID status. All other patients are considered unknown status and will be approached as a possible COVID patient requiring PPE.

Code Blue Teams

- There will be 2 code blue response teams. A known positive patient in a biocontained area will have a code blue COVID response from the UT1 - ICU team. This will allow the UT1 - ICU team to remain in their PPE, utilize the designated “dirty” stairwell (North side) and enter the biocontained unit without causing additional delay to doff their PPE from the ICU.
- For a patient with unknown status as noted above, there will be a Clean Code Blue team. This team will respond to any area that is not a biocontained area. This team may be led by a hospitalist, cardiologist, or ICU provider.
- The clean team will need to don PPE to enter the room. This is required to maintain staff safety.

Important Changes

- Pharmacy will not be entering the biocontained areas of ICU, UT3, or PACU. They also will not enter rooms of any patient under investigation. All codes will be run without pharmacy present. Pharmacy is putting together grab-n-go bags with first round medications for ease of obtaining them. PPE should be available with the code cart.
- If assistance is required with emergent central line placement, an Attending can request a senior surgical resident or surgical Attending’s help through the surgical service phone (860-463-3148).
- Avoid BVM ventilations if possible; use high flow O2 for pre-oxygenation for intubation. Bring transport vent to room for transporting patient off unit. If transport vent not available use a BVM with antiviral filter.
- Do not request the LUCAS machine for COVID positive patients.
- Limit staff performing compressions and total number of staff in room to as few as possible to manage the patient.