

AMAZING PEOPLE DOING AMAZING THINGS

Emergency Department prepared for an expected surge of COVID-19 patients in New Hampshire

Designated as a Level III Trauma Center, the staff of Exeter Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) are no strangers to urgent situations. But the quick onset of the coronavirus pandemic in March prompted the need for an unprecedented response to ensure the department was prepared to care for a predicted surge of COVID-19 patients.

Led by **Roger Bailey**, Director of Emergency Services, with support from **Mary Godfrey**, Lean Leader, and **Erin Federer**, RN, the ED staff worked quickly to develop a contingency plan that could be immediately implemented if needed. "We had to completely restructure the way we do everything, including patient flow, communication, personal protective equipment protocols, changing the way patients are intubated, and more," Roger says. The plan included setting up an ambulance/decon bay as a treatment area, and transitioning part of the waiting area and south conference room into an isolation area for patients suspected of having the virus, so they could be tested and treated without posing a risk to other patients.

"Mary was instrumental in helping us develop processes and teams, as well as keeping everyone on track. Her expertise and leadership was a key part of our overall planning success," Rogers says. "Erin was our patient care lead and was responsible for designing clinical work flow among other things. Her exceptional project management skills was also key to our success."

Roger is quick to note the support his department received from other areas as well, including: **Aaron Garganta**, Senior Director, Engineering and Physical Environment; **Ray LeBlanc**, Director of Safety & Emergency Management Programs; **Eric Petersen**, Director of Engineering; and **Derek Bumford**, Safety/Emergency Management Specialist. "They were so helpful with all the logistics of setting up 'clean' zones, establishing the patient overflow tent, working with the National Guard to create additional overflow space if needed, and converting the ambulance/decon bay into a treatment space." He also wants to thank others who played a pivotal role in helping to establish the plan, including **Rick Belschner** and **Ryan Muller and the Environmental Services team**; **Dwayne Bowen and his team from Materials Management**; and **Deanna King and the Pharmacy team**. Roger also wants to acknowledge the assistance they received from the staff of **Endoscopy, Outpatient Surgery, Orthopedics and Core Physicians**.

"There were many challenges posed by the level of uncertainty about how the pandemic would impact our service area and numerous questions from staff who at times felt overwhelmed by the amount and rapid pace of communication and information they were being asked to absorb in a short period of time," Mary says. "There was also a lot of fear and anxiety surrounding the pandemic and our preparedness efforts. But everyone pulled together and supported each other."

She and Roger are especially grateful to Erin, along with other department members who stepped up to work with them to develop the plan and serve as resources for the entire staff: **Lindsey Boschetti**, RN, Clinical Practice Leader, who coordinated staffing, worked with the pharmacy, and ensured communication; **Joshua True**, RN, who coordinated equipment and supplies; **Marjorie Stevens-Beville**, RN, who coordinated personal protective equipment; **Anne Meginnis**, RN, Professional Development Specialist, who provided staff education; **Gia Guerard**, RN, for her continued staff engagement efforts; and **Wendy DeMartino**, MD and **Nicholas Armellino**, MD, clinical expertise and guidance.

"This plan could not have been successfully put in place without all of us working together as one," Mary says. "It was truly a collaborative effort."



Some of our Emergency Department staff members.