

Back up and running

A solid process reintroduces elective surgeries at Mount St. Mary's Hospital

Following Gov. Andrew Cuomo's announcement on April 21 lifting the restrictions for Niagara County's hospitals to perform elective surgeries, Mount St. Mary's Hospital designed a careful process to reopen its surgery department to elective procedures, recognizing it was more than just "flipping a switch."

"When we learned elective surgeries could begin again in Niagara County, we knew we had to have a solid, thoughtful process to help our staff, surgeons and patients feel comfortable coming into our hospital," said C.J. Urlaub, president of Mount St. Mary's Hospital and senior vice president of strategic partnerships, integration and care delivery for Niagara County. "We assembled an interdisciplinary team to work collaboratively to address any concerns anyone might have, especially around patient and staff safety."

As part of the normal elective surgery process, patients must be cleared for surgery through pre-admission testing. Now, they also need to test negative for COVID-19, which is an additional step in this process. Safety was at the forefront of getting things ready to resume elective surgery for the hospital's environmental services department, which took extra measures to ensure quality exceeded expectations.

"Patients' minds should be at



ease with how Catholic Health is reopening elective surgeries," said Dr. John Karpie of Trinity Orthopaedics, who performed two surgeries during the week. "At Mount St. Mary's, they have taken the proper precautions, and I was very pleased with the transition; it was a smooth experience in the OR and in recovery."

Mount St. Mary's discharged its last COVID-19 patient on April 17. In addition, the hospital learned last week that it received its fourth consecutive "A" safety grade from the Leapfrog Group. Leapfrog's rating system is based on how well hospitals protect patients from medical errors, accidents, injuries and infections.

A press release noted, "The careful planning around quality and patient safety has proven successful for Mount St. Mary's, as 45 elective surgeries and 16 gastrointestinal procedures were performed during the first week of resuming services, with many more scheduled in the coming weeks."

Trinity Orthopaedic physician Dr. Thaddeus Szarzanowicz performed three of those surgeries. He said, "You really feel safe the minute you walk in the door. Significant precautions have been taken to make the process efficient and as comfortable for patients as possible."

Obituary

Robert E. Waterson III

Robert E. Waterson III of Grand Island entered into rest May 6, 2020. He was the son of Sally M. and the late Robert E. Waterson Jr.; brother of Jeff (Sharon) Waterson, Michael (Christina) Waterson, Diane (Brent VanderVlaet) Waterson

and Brett (Melanie) Waterson; and also survived by many nieces and nephews; the nephew of Laura Worley and August Worley.

A memorial Mass will be held at a later date. Share condolences at kaiserfuneral.com.

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Programs are supported in part by a grant from the NYS Department of Health.