

May 12, 2021

A message from Bob Van Meeteren, Reedsburg Area Medical Center President/CEO



I hope this letter finds you all well and feeling optimistic. I know I am! I am feeling like forward progress is being made and that is so exciting! I have often heard the phrase that we are “rewinding” back to normal. I personally don’t think there is really a “rewinding” as much as it is a moving forward with renewed purpose. As we continue moving forward I do pause to reflect back on RAMC’s role and response to this pandemic. I wanted to share with you some important highlights.

As the pandemic first hit we quickly responded by putting non-essential procedures and appointments on pause in preparation of what may come. We knew what it would mean to our organization’s bottom line as we lost \$12 million dollars in gross revenue. We felt, however, that it was the right thing to do, to prepare for what may come. With this pause, we wanted to assure our patients had access to their providers so we quickly mobilized to offer telehealth services. This service was received very well and we were pleased to serve our patients in this way.

For patients with COVID symptoms, within very short order we opened a special respiratory clinic within our Walk-In Care center. The goal of this was and continues to be, to allow these patients a separate entrance and exit to safely seek care.

We developed a Safe Care Navigator role and program to provide screenings at every entrance to help decrease the potential spread of COVID-19. This program continues today.

RAMC participated in the State of Wisconsin’s CNA-in-training program. In all, we trained 14 CNA’s. Some were our current team members and we also brought in new, to become certified nurse assistants. These additional CNA’s were to be mobilized quickly in times of need.

Our Senior Life Center put every possible precaution in place and we are proud to say they did not see a single COVID-19 case amongst our residents and tenants. We continue to follow the federal guidelines, allowing scheduled in-person visits and we are so happy to see our residents safely have that time with family. We know how important that is on health and wellness.

When word came that a COVID- 19 vaccine would be available we knew we had to quickly jump into action to be a trusted and reliable source for vaccines. We reached out to Beverly Hoege, retired RAMC Chief Nursing Officer who spearheaded staffing our own vaccine clinic utilizing retired nurses. How thrilled these professionals were and continue to be, to serve our communities. We’ve given thousands of vaccines and will continue to work toward vaccinating every eligible person who seeks it.

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We have treated many COVID-19 patients both as inpatients and outpatients and could not be more proud of our team members. They have worked tirelessly and their dedication has never gone unnoticed.

In all, RAMC has spent over \$2 million dollars in COVID-related expenses. This money was spent on personal protective gear including PAPR's (Power Air-Purifying Respirator), COVID-related wages such as our Safe Care Navigators and those staffing our vaccine clinic. This was and continues to be, money well spent.

As we move forward we will never stop reassessing the lessons learned. And we have learned a lot, believe me. We continue to discuss and analyze what we would do differently and what we would do again. At the very beginning we had little information available to make our critical decisions. Certainly this was uncharted waters and we hope not to sail them again! Yet, we became stronger. We are more resilient. And more grateful than ever.

We will never forget the priceless support of so many businesses and individuals throughout the communities we serve. We thank you from the bottom of each of our hearts.

To every RAMC team member, thank you. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to alter course on a dime as the course had twists and turns sometimes multiple times in a day. Thank you for your tireless dedication to every patient you serve. I am forever grateful to each and every one of you.

And, to our patients, thank you for your patience. Thank you for the trust you have in us. We are honored to be an integral part of your lives and this community. We are proud to be your partner. Please know you are always safe with us.

With a very grateful heart,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Van Meeteren', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Bob Van Meeteren
President/CEO