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June 24, 2020

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Gov. Wolf Thanks Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center Staff During Visit

Harrisburg, PA – As the commonwealth continues its measured, phased reopening and COVID-19 case counts continue to decline, Governor Tom Wolf visited Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center today to thank staff and learn more about how the facility is handling the pandemic and preparing for a possible resurgence in the fall.

“For almost four months, the staff here has done an amazing job working day and night to care for patients,” Gov. Wolf said, addressing staff in attendance. “Taking care of patients with a new virus that we didn’t know much about was a challenge, and you’ve had to balance their health and wellness with keeping the other patients at that medical center safe. That took a team effort.”

The Wolf Administration approached the COVID-19 pandemic with a plan, by being prepared and by issuing both stay-at-home and reopening orders using a measured, phased approach that combined science with input from health experts. The Department of Health opened its Operations Center at the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency in January, well before the first cases arrived in Pennsylvania. That preparedness was key to ensuring the state’s hospitals, including the medical center, were not overwhelmed.

The Milton S. Hershey Medical Center addressed preparedness by ordering enough PPE in advance of any cases at the facility and by making use of a Special Pathogens Team to directly address the health care issues associated with COVID-19. The team was created to prepare for possible cases of Ebola in 2014 and was able to morph and adapt to address COVID-19 at the Hershey facility and its sister hospital, St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Reading. Team members have years of training and are dedicated to ensuring COVID-19 patients recover and can return home.

Gov. Wolf was joined by Deborah Berini, president, Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and Sec. of Health Dr. Rachel Levine.

“Today, our work continues – not only to ensure we can treat current COVID-19 patients and that we are ready for any potential future surge, but also to make sure that every patient who needs us can safely and confidently receive care,” said Berini. “As we do so, every step forward is made to find new and better ways to serve our patients while following careful consideration of public health guidelines, including from the Pennsylvania Department of Health.”

“Thank you to all of the staff at Penn State Health and all of the nurses, doctors, EMTs and first responders who answered the call to help without reservation,” Dr. Rachel Levine said. “Your efforts saved lives under extraordinary circumstances. We are forever grateful for your service.

“By wearing a mask, we aren’t just protecting ourselves and others from exposure to COVID-19, we are saying ‘thank you’ to the brave health care professionals working day and night to save our lives.”

Read more on Gov. Wolf’s Process to Reopen PA [here](#).

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