

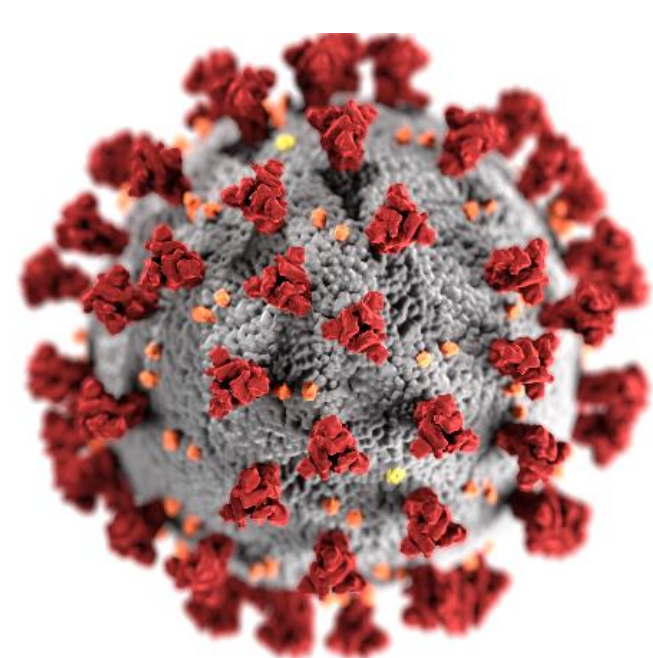


All Hands on Deck: Conquering Covid

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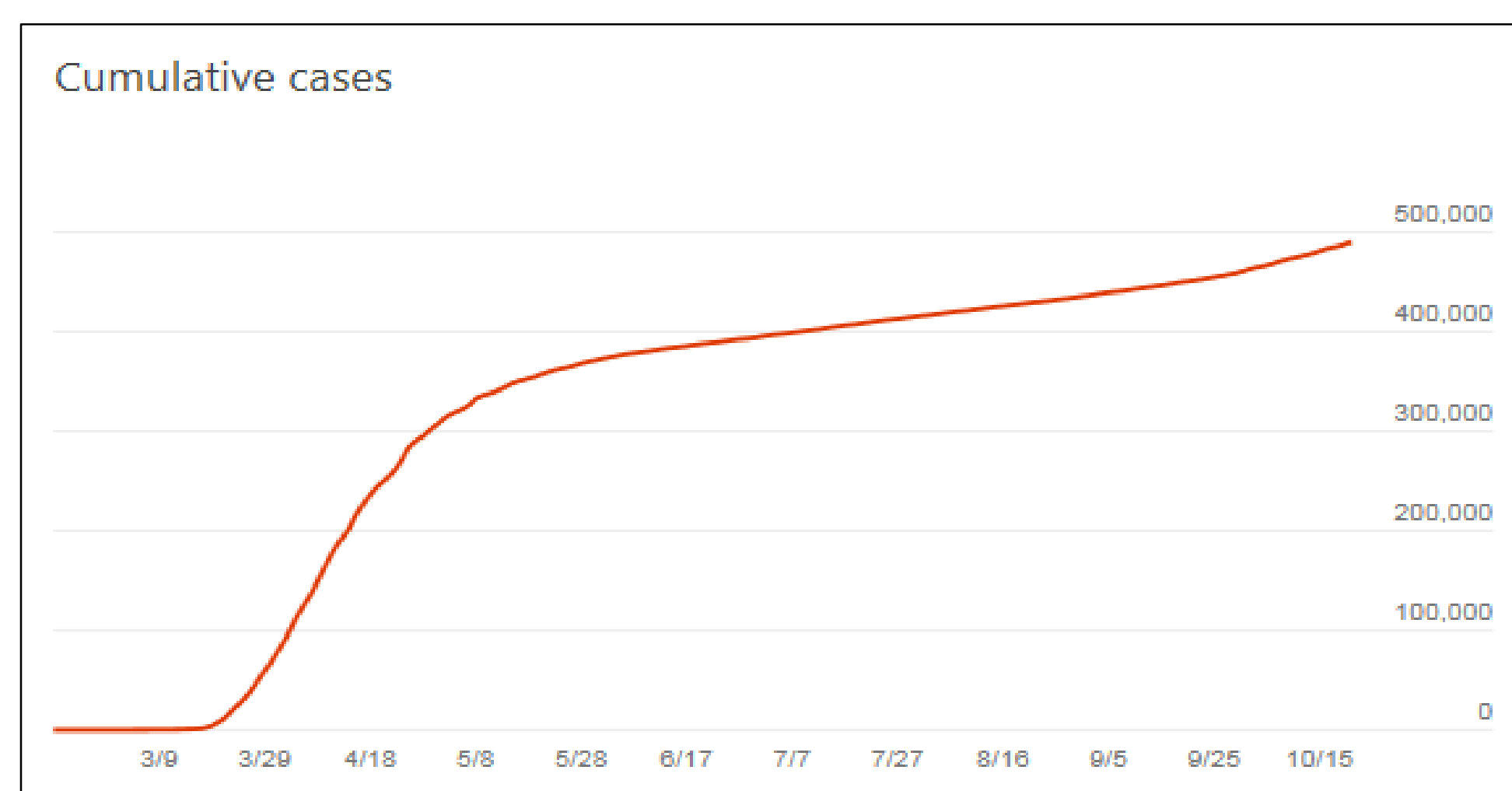
Purpose

During the height of the coronavirus pandemic a forty-three bed telemetry floor was converted into a multilevel acuity unit caring for patients highly suspicious and positive for coronavirus disease (COVID). Staff members were trained for enhanced donning and doffing of personal protective equipment and educated on the care and treatment of the COVID patient.



Background

In New York State, as of October 25, 2020 there have been 500,000 confirmed cases of COVID. In early March 2020, North Shore University Hospital (NSUH), identified a telemetry unit as the first unit to admit and care for acutely ill COVID positive patients. A team of multiple disciplines and services were joined together to prepare the unit for its fight against COVID.



Methods

An “all hands on deck” approach was initiated to turn a forty-three bed telemetry unit into a fully functioning coronavirus unit that eventually transitioned into an intensive care unit. The large interdisciplinary team which consisted of staff members from nursing, ancillary, environmental, respiratory therapy, material operations, pharmacy, research, infectious disease, physical therapy, information technology, patient and family centered care and engineering departments were instrumental in optimizing the unit environment. The nursing professional development team was charged with training all staff on utilization of personal protective equipment, and also tasked with updating the staff on trial drugs, practice changes, and managing care for patients with severe respiratory distress. A number of innovative strategies to improve patient outcomes were pioneered on units caring for coronavirus positive patients. Some of the technological implementations include:

- Patient monitoring camera systems installed in the ceiling of the patient rooms to monitor patients visually at a central monitoring station
- Tablets set up to display vital signs outside of the closed rooms
- Continuous pulse oximetry transmitted via Bluetooth to smart phones and monitored by a trained technician on an electronic dashboard
- Windows created in the doors of the rooms to allow observation of patients through closed doors
- Utilization of an electronic management system and quick response (QR) codes to ensure adequate distribution of personal protective equipment
- Remote telemetry monitoring and outpatient cardiac monitoring devices to observe for arrhythmias
- Use of Ipads for patient and family connections

Outcomes



Working through a pandemic brings many challenges, as well as opportunities for leveraging innovative ideas. Historically, nurses have successfully and promptly responded and adapted to new challenges, such as managing rising patient acuity, safely administering trial drugs, and anticipating and preventing adverse events. The teamwork of multiple departments during a very challenging time helped to successfully maintain staff and patient safety. All nursing quality indicators have exceeded annual stretch goals. Patient satisfaction scores have improved dramatically through 2020. During the height of the COVID surge minimal numbers of staff were infected with the virus. Staff report feeling competent and confident in caring for this complex patient population.

