



April 7, 2020

Dear Neighbors,

It appears, based upon Governor Cuomo's recent reports and the hope that we all have been practicing appropriate social distancing since at least March 20th, that we are approaching what may be the peak of this pandemic here in New York. That is not to say that this is over, in fact, it is not. But if we continue to do what we are doing, we will start to see the numbers of new cases begin to slow and then decrease.

In these extraordinary circumstances, the information received from Huntington Hospital's executive director, Dr. Fitterman reveals that our hospital is challenged yet is finding many ways to win the day-- and we should all be proud. Some important highlights:

We have found ways to increase our critical care capacity in this period from 26 to more than 120--a nearly five-fold increase. We have no way of knowing whether this will be sufficient but no one could have imagined being able to create this sort of capacity just two short weeks ago.

We have converted our old ED, conference rooms and even part of the cafeteria in order to receive more COVID-19 patients and provide crucial surge capacity for our community.

We are testing patients who are presenting for non-COVID 19 reasons and finding that more than 15% are positive. This means that it is entirely possible that a very significant percentage of the community may be infected and asymptomatic. Do not relax your guard regarding social distancing, gelling and minimizing your outside forays when possible.

I note with great sadness the loss of Huntington RN John Abruzzo this past week. His loss is a reminder of the strength and heroism within the four walls of our institution and our debt to those who are facing this menace shift after shift. These heroes have already walked 112 of our Huntington neighbors back out to their families at ongoing personal risk to themselves and their families. I was fortunate to have known him from my experiences doing lead rounds over the past few years.

Our hospital, under the able leadership of Dr. Nick Fitterman, Randy Howard, Sue Knoepffler, Dr. Michael Grosso and many others, continues to find ways to innovate and meet this unprecedented challenge head on. Even more remarkably, we continue to focus on and meet the human, spiritual and social needs of our hospital family by offering support in many different ways not necessarily demonstrated just by cold facts and figures. We are dedicated to our staff and love and support them as they do their jobs. Our community is dedicated to our hospital and is finding ways to let us know. Our mission remains the same.

A growing number of people want to fundraise -- to support our caregivers, our hospitals, the communities we serve, and the remarkable research taking place at the Feinstein Institutes. To support those efforts, we have established the [Northwell Health COVID-19 Emergency Fund](#). Our site allows for direct donations to our COVID-19 Emergency Fund, selecting Northwell Health, a specific hospital, or Research to benefit from their support. We have also announced a [Peer-to-Peer fundraising platform](#) that allows individuals to set up fundraisers for specific funding need areas under the umbrella of the Northwell Health Foundation. This is the most direct and impactful way to provide support at this time, and funds will go directly to the program, hospital, or area selected.

We are addressing today's pressing pandemic needs - on the front lines and preparing for what's next:

- Clinical trials for COVID-19 treatment and prevention, with significant implications for future pandemics. [Click here](#) to read more.
- Behavioral health services for our courageous healthcare workers who put themselves at risk each day to protect us, and are now at risk for PTSD.
- Telemedicine programs to treat seniors and high-risk patients who are isolated due to the virus. We can stand together for every patient struggling with the psychosocial realities of what has become our temporary 'new normal'.

We are well-equipped to take care of the people who need us, but we can't fight this disease alone. On behalf of everyone who looks to us at this unprecedented time, we look to you. I hope you and your family are safe and well. Please visit [Northwell's Coronavirus Digital Resource Center](#) often for helpful articles from our experts.

I hope this message finds you mindful, healthy and at home with your families.



Keith Friedlander
Chair, Board of Directors

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