

# Weathering the Storm

March 17, 2020, Friday

This week was by no means easy. However, it also brought encouraging signs as the onslaught began to abate.

For the first time since the pandemic arrived in our region, we saw the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 decrease—a suggestion that we may be past the peak of the crisis. With continued vigilance and unrelenting effort, we may have put the worst behind us. But it is not the drop in patient numbers that is most inspiring. It is another number that continues to rise that pushes us forward: more than 3,000 successful discharges.

Your heroism has saved more than 3,000 patients. But, of course, they are much more than patients; they are children, mothers, wives, husbands, fathers, grandparents, great-grandparents, friends, lovers, and, yes, colleagues too. You have saved them. Many would have perished without your help.

People like 33-year-old Janet Mendez, whose story was [eloquently captured](#) by the *Daily News*. Ms. Mendez had checked into Mount Sinai Morningside on March 25 and was immediately intubated and put on a ventilator. COVID-19 had ravaged her lungs, leaving her oxygen levels dangerously low. After a month of incalculable effort and unwavering support from countless staff, she made a gradual recovery. Miraculously, she was removed from her ventilator and, on Monday, she went home. Stories like this one—of heroism, hard work, and perseverance—give us hope. And stories like these are being written every day.

As we have mentioned through the weeks, we are surrounded by and indebted to all of the heroes who are walking and working amongst us. From our families who step up in our absence to our clinical staff, our laboratory technicians, our plumbers and electricians, and our information technology teams, all contribute to making the life-saving work possible. We could go on and on. You are the heroes that walk amongst us.

This was perfectly summed up in the feature in [The New York Times](#) about a day in the life of our very own David Van De Carr, a respiratory therapist at Mount Sinai Morningside. In it, he states:

“What gets to me these days is the kindness of other people. I get hugs from transporters and nurses. We say ‘I love you’ a lot more now.

It's overwhelming, the tragedy of it all. The coming together of people, risking their lives all day long. And that's everyone. The people cleaning the room. Cleaning the bathrooms. I've had people ask me 'Why don't you just take off?' and I can't. It's my [...] It's more than a job, it's my duty."

To us, this is the embodiment of what it means to be a hero and what it feels like to be surrounded by other like-minded heroes. The rain and wind storm that passed through the area this week was a perfect analogy for what we have all been a part of: the fear, the intensity, the sense of being overwhelmed. But ultimately, it passed, and what was left was the recovery and maybe even some [beauty](#).

Today the pandemic is moving before our eyes and, though we are not through it yet, signs of hope are everywhere. Your city calls to you nightly; your colleagues cheer and support you; your families and your children look up to you, knowing what you do in this moment matters. In the chaos and destruction, there is still beauty and hope and you are it.

Ken and Dennis

Kenneth L. Davis, MD  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Mount Sinai Health System

Dennis S. Charney, MD  
Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean  
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai  
President for Academic Affairs  
Mount Sinai Health System