

A Time of Reflection and Gratitude

May 22, 2020 Friday

As we close in on our third month of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York, we want to take a moment to reflect on the challenges that we have all faced, but also to recognize the successes we have achieved in this humanitarian mission. While this is not the first crisis we have faced, it is without a doubt the most challenging in recent history, and it tested us like never before. As the situation evolved, time and again we were able to pivot, adjust, learn, and do better. This resiliency is at the heart of who we are as a health system. When challenged, we adapt, improve, and overcome.

There is no greater example of this than Theresa Francisco. As you may have [recently read](#), Ms. Francisco served the Queens community as a nurse at Mount Sinai Queens for 38 years until she retired this January. Only two short months later she entered the hospital again, this time as a patient battling COVID-19. Unfortunately, it became very serious.

As her condition deteriorated, Ms. Francisco suffered kidney failure and was placed on a ventilator for nearly two weeks in April. She was obviously in very serious condition; however, despite the difficulties, she slowly recovered at the caring hands of her former colleagues. Because of her care—your care—day by day she fought and got better. Last Tuesday, she was discharged. At her departure, as her colleagues and friends cheered and cried tears of joy, she defiantly declared, “I beat COVID-19, and I’m going home.” This is strength. This is determination. This is resilience. And this is what Mount Sinai is all about.

As a system too, we are adapting and overcoming. The total number of COVID-19 patients successfully discharged continues to grow, and the current COVID-19 patient census is down dramatically from where we were just weeks ago. Week by week, patient by patient, thanks to your dedication and skill, progress has steadily continued, and we remain cautiously optimistic that the trend will continue. We are vigilant and ready to respond to evolving conditions.

As you have already experienced, part of this new normal means even greater recognition and respect for you in our communities and across the nation. You are trusted, and for all the right reasons. Because of that, you have a unique opportunity to advocate for the continued exercising of behaviors that will minimize the risk of a COVID-19 resurgence. When you wear masks in public, maintain safe distances, are diligent about hand hygiene, and encourage others to do so as well, you are amplifying these important messages and we are all better for it. We hope you will keep doing that.

Memorial Day has always been a time of remembrance and gratitude. A day dedicated to remembering all who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. We honor them all

for their courage, dedication, and valor. To all the military veterans who work in our system and for those who have family and friends who served, we thank you for giving so much of yourselves in service to our country. This year, more than ever, we are grateful to everyone for the work you do, the sacrifices you make, and your resilience through it all.

Enjoy the weekend, stay safe, and thank you.

Ken and Dennis

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