

# Unsung Heroes and Cautious Optimism

April 10, 2020

Over the past month, we have shared our immense pride in what you are all doing as well as our growing concern for the worst-case scenarios. Today, we are pleased to share some encouraging news that the tide may be starting to turn. In a real and sustained sign that New York is flattening the curve, for the first time since this crisis started, this week the state saw hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and daily intubations decrease. This is an important trend that suggests your hard work and the policies in place are beginning to pay off in the battle against this disease.

However, this does not mean the fight is over—far from it. In fact, despite these positive data points, we also saw the horrors of the daily count of COVID-19 deaths reaching new highs on consecutive days. Even with the good news, our daunting reality remains very challenging, and we must brace ourselves for the continued mission as we move forward one day and one life at a time. When this battle began, the scale, scope, and human toll were impossible to predict. Because of your extraordinary work we do feel more cautiously optimistic.

In recent weeks, we have discussed and highlighted the heroism all across our Health System. Heroism is happening every second of every day. To us and to the entire world, you have personified selflessness, compassion, and excellence. We are weathering a storm unlike any in our Health System's history, and we are in awe of you as you navigate these uncharted waters professionally and personally each and every day.

There are many unsung heroes whom we rely on every day. Our dedicated support staff make the next shift, the next day, the next battle possible, keeping our facilities clean and safe, our supplies stocked, and our spirits up, even as they manage their own anxiety, worry, and responsibilities. To our administrative staff and custodial teams, our security guards and delivery workers, to everyone who makes the work possible ... thank you. Thank you for your bravery. Thank you for your resilience and your excellence.

The same goes to your loved ones. We know how challenging it is for all of you to come to work every day, and that it is a logistical and emotional burden to those who support you. They too make our lifesaving work possible, and we want to recognize the spouses, children, parents, loved ones, and all who share the responsibility of maintaining some semblance of normality in our personal lives. And particularly for those who have been separated from their partners and children, we know that the stress is very real for you—and that the fear is very real for them. Your families and loved ones are the foundation that allows us all to do our jobs and save lives. We would not be where we are without them. Please know we are thinking of them too.

In recent days, we've been reminded of one of our favorite poems, "Invictus." "Invictus," which translated from Latin roughly means unconquerable, is about persevering no matter the challenges or the struggles we face. It includes these lines:

*Under the bludgeonings of chance,  
My head is bloody, but unbowed....*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid....*

*I am the master of my fate;  
I am the captain of my soul.*

While William Henley wrote those words almost 150 years ago, their message resonates today. Your work encapsulates those words and you embody that poem. You are strength in the moment of challenge. You are unified in the midst of chaos. You are unrelenting in your heroic endeavors. You are facing down the fears that distress all of us. You are bone-tired and worn down, but never defeated. You are saving thousands of lives and bringing a beam of hope amid the darkness. And you are unconquerable.

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