

Our Path Forward, Together

May 8, 2020 Friday

Another week of progress brings us closer to our new normal. In recent weeks, we cautiously watched as we overcame the peak of the COVID-19 crisis and continued to see the rate of new infections and hospitalizations slow. Now, the number of COVID-19 patients in our hospitals is less than one-third of what it was at the peak—an enormous improvement. You have literally saved more lives, in a shorter amount of time, than at any other point in our history. And while the region has been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that many patients with non-COVID-19 illnesses need us too.

We have been hard at work transitioning to this new reality in which we will be doing two things at once. We will be providing exceptional care to COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients at the same time. In the most noticeable sign, this week our Central Park field facility began the process of closing down. And all across our system we are beginning to transform back to how we used to operate. These are significant milestones, and sure signs of progress.

But the truth is, things will look very different than they did before this crisis. We should not expect to go back to the way things used to be, but to move into the future with a new normal. What that means and how that looks is still evolving. One example is that telehealth has moved more into the mainstream of health care. There will be other changes as well.

This week we also celebrated our nursing colleagues as part of National Nurses Week. The Mount Sinai nursing community is the finest anywhere. This pandemic has reinforced that truth for us and for the world. Our entire Mount Sinai family holds you in the very highest esteem. It is important that you know that.

In addition to thanking our tremendous staff and teams, when we talk about a true team effort we would be remiss if we did not also pause to thank U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, and the entire New York delegation for all of their bipartisan support, advocacy, and guidance as we have worked our way through this pandemic. Their unyielding support has been vital to our collective success.

And while we work our way to our new normal, we will need to remain just as vigilant about COVID-19. Our region's infection rates continue to trend in the right direction but we are not out of the woods yet. As the state reopens, we all must be ready for even the slightest hint of a second wave so that we can advocate for the behaviors that limit further spread while we care for those infected. This pandemic will continue to be an endurance test.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge your bravery. Long before it was clear that we would have enough PPE to protect you, or enough staff to meet the challenges of this pandemic, you were right there doing what you do best. You were giving what you had to your fellow human beings suffering with this terrible illness. And while we worked to catch up, and eventually stay ahead of, the almost overwhelming number of patients needing us, you never faltered. Bravery does not mean being without fear or anxiety. Quite the opposite. It means doing what is needed despite the fear and anxiety.

We have never been more honored to be your colleagues or to wear the Mount Sinai badge alongside you.

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