

HENNEPIN HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

# Impact

GENEROSITY HAPPENS HERE

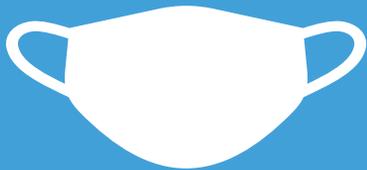
## Responding to COVID-19

A special edition honoring the healthcare heroes of Hennepin Healthcare

# 3Ws

**Demonstrate your concern for others as well as yourself by following the 3 Ws.**

## **Wear Your Mask**



## **Wash Your Hands**



## **Watch Your Distance**



The Impact newsletter is published twice a year by the Hennepin Healthcare Foundation. Editor is Amy Carlson. Contributing writers in this issue are Amy Carlson, Tom Hayes, Chris Hill, and Brian Lucas. Design by Karen Olson. Contributing photographers Scott Streble and self-submissions. To be removed from our mailing list please call 612-873-6090 or email [foundation@hcmcd.org](mailto:foundation@hcmcd.org).

# TURNING

## **Jennifer DeCubellis, CEO Hennepin Healthcare**

When I became CEO of Hennepin Healthcare, I had big plans. Most of them involved listening, learning and developing new ways to move our mission forward in helping our community. In a matter of weeks it became apparent COVID-19 had other plans, and the mission of our institution was going to be put to the test like never before.

As a trauma center, we're used to urgency, we're just not used to urgency lasting so long. This pandemic is an "all hands on deck" moment, a call to action. The most reassuring part of it has been seeing how quickly people have responded, turning the chaos into confidence. Our staff, across the board, did not run away. Instead, they said, "We've got this." They jumped in, in creative ways, aimed at making a difference and being there for each other and for our community.

We serve a particularly vulnerable population in Minnesota. When you hear about social determinants of health and high risk factors for COVID, you're hearing the reality of many of the patients we care for



# CHAOS INTO CONFIDENCE

every day. By definition, this places additional barriers in front of our ability to get ahead of this virus. Things like testing, contact tracing, distancing, shelter, nutrition, and masks are all particular challenges for many in our community. We don't shy away from these challenges. We meet them head on.

In this issue, produced by our Foundation, you will read stories about people who are using their passion and expertise to find solutions and address the unique needs of our community.

The first months of COVID ushered in a time of unprecedented innovation across Hennepin Healthcare. We had to figure out new safety measures. We developed telehealth practices where none existed before. Then, when we talked to our patients and learned that it wasn't working for everybody, we quickly made changes to adjust the technology and add languages to meet the needs of our patients. We reached out into the community to test populations that were at highest risk for the virus.

We also cleared away some of the rules and regulations that normally would have slowed down this kind of

innovation because our focus had to be on the community, and keeping people safe. Throughout this time, we heard one phrase over and over again from our team members: "I want to help."

Our employees from across the organization acted out of concern for each other and out of commitment to our patients to do what needed to be done. Time and time again!

There was a gift shop worker who, when the gift shop closed, asked if she could help with traffic control at the hospital entrances. There were researchers who worked to tackle the unique questions presented by this virus, and were able to bring leading edge treatments to our patients. There were residents who dove into the challenges presented by COVID as an opportunity to learn and contribute to patient care. There were people who stepped up to get trained on PPE use, or COVID testing, going to the front lines when they didn't have to. It was obvious that we were facing a pandemic problem, not a people problem, and our people were going to get it done.

Another aspect of the coronavirus response that continues to help us

through is generosity. We have been amazed by the way the community has rallied around our health care workers. This includes a wave of support for the Hennepin Heroes Fund, set up by the Hennepin Healthcare Foundation. This fund helps provide shelter to doctors and nurses who don't want to risk going home between shifts. It brings nutritious meals to the front lines, allowing staff to take care of themselves while taking care of others. It also helps expand needed spiritual support services to help our employees process and cope during particularly difficult days. Creating a critical support system for our staff, the foundation and its donors became the wind beneath our wings.

We often talk about Hennepin Healthcare being "7,000 strong." Never before has this strength been so evident. Our collective reaction to COVID is showing off our strength. It is not ego driven, it is patient driven. It shows how our hearts and minds can drive us forward, even in the face of great uncertainty. Even now, we don't know when this will end and what twists and turns are ahead. Still, we have shown what we are made of and that we will find a path to that finish line together.

# EMERGING GETTING READY



**COVID-19**

# THREAT FOR A PANDEMIC



You can plan. You can train. You can read and study and prepare. But when a pandemic is approaching your doorstep, you need to act. By late January, 2020, employees across Hennepin Healthcare realized COVID-19 was coming and it was going to change everything. That meant everyone had to figure out how to be part of the solution.

Drawing on the experiences of hard-hit communities overseas and on the west and east coasts, staff worked to absorb the lessons of the pandemic response. Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, air-flow and ventilation needs, visitor protocols, bed and ventilator shortages... there were so many questions to answer with no time to spare.

Recognizing the need for a coordinated response, leaders opened the Incident Command Center and staff mobilized across the organization. The pandemic would soon be here.

# GETTING READY FOR A PANDEMIC



## PPE and Supply Chain

From the beginning of the pandemic, it was apparent the first line of defense was not a vaccine, it was masks, gloves, goggles, and ventilators. Shortages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were being reported around the country. Stories of doctors and nurses who had to wear the same N95 mask for entire weeks, or of Intensive Care Units that were exploring ways to have patients share ventilators, illustrated that supply chain logistics were going to be critical to saving lives.

In early January, long before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, supply chain leadership started working with clinical leaders and infection control to develop a plan. They looked at data and case studies to determine needs and identify possible shortages. They had to get creative and look for new vendors to be sure they would be able to handle a possible coronavirus surge.

“It was challenging but we’re built to be proactive,” said Luis Valadez, Senior Director of Supply Chain. “We could either sit back and cross our fingers or we could step up. It was stressful but we knew that everything we brought in, every vent, every disinfectant wipe, every piece of PPE would be put to good use.”

In addition to bringing in more supplies, staff worked on protocols to be sure people knew when to use PPE and how to wear it effectively. PPE carts were stationed in patient care units along with specially trained “PPE Buddies” who helped make sure doctors and nurses were protected before entering patient rooms.

Thankfully, increased manufacturing, creative approaches to sourcing, and community donations have made PPE readily available, allowing staff to stay safe and ready to withstand the long lens of this pandemic.

## Lab

Listening to and learning from international connections built over years in the industry, Dr. Glen Hansen, Director of Hennepin Healthcare’s Clinical Microbiology and Molecular Diagnostic Lab, understood the urgency of placing orders for critical testing supplies and equipment. So by the time COVID-19 testing began in March, his team had already secured more than 200,000 test kits. The lab increased staffing from four to 15 full-time medical technologists and extended shifts to provide 24-hour coverage.

This preparation propelled Hennepin Healthcare to the forefront of virus testing for patients, staff, and community members, with the ability to process up to 2,000 tests per day. The lab was the first in the state to provide testing for public walk-in, perform saliva tests and to return results for patients in less than 24 hours.

“Getting rapid turnaround from our lab - in some cases less than 70 minutes - is crucial not only for screening asymptomatic inpatients, but also for those with symptoms whose course of care is determined by this diagnosis,” said Dr. Hansen.

Hennepin’s long tradition of excellence in medical education, research and innovation has created lasting industry relationships all over the world. These relationships become invaluable in the face of a global pandemic.



## Trauma Response

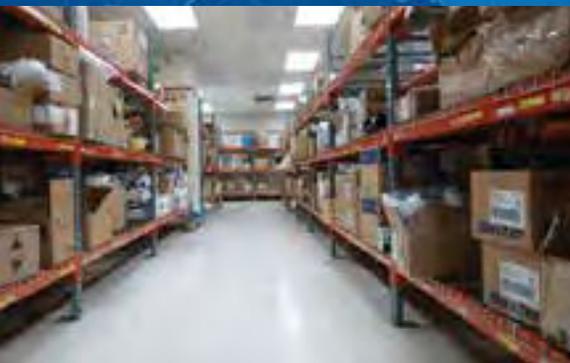
As a Level I Trauma facility, Hennepin Healthcare had a responsibility to prepare not only for an influx of COVID-19 patients, but also to safely handle the wide variety of trauma cases that normally come through the doors. This meant that new precautions had to be put in place. Every patient suddenly had to be treated as a potential COVID-19 carrier.

Emergency Department doctors, nurses and staff leapt into action quickly to figure out ways to keep everyone safe while providing the best possible care.

“We were able to create a completely new space, a second stabilization room, just for COVID-19 patients,” said Dr. Tom Wyatt, Medical Director of the Emergency Department. “We collaborated, came up with a plan on the fly, and got it done.”

The development of new space required multiple teams working together addressing things like air flow, technology, infection control, and communication among team members who were suddenly trying to collaborate through masks and face shields.

In many ways, trauma care is all about teamwork and innovation, so when coronavirus arrived, the trauma team was ready.



# COVID-19

## Technology

The coronavirus pandemic forced healthcare providers to dramatically increase their use of digital tools. At Hennepin, this meant not only speeding up the purchase, training and rollout of technology, but also figuring out how to connect these resources with the staff and patient population.

When more than 1,500 employees had to start working from home in late March, Hennepin's Information Technology department worked around the clock to support this transition. They updated software, built infrastructure and researched various tools to allow staff to connect through more robust and secure online systems.

During this intense period, all nonessential/nonemergency clinic visits were cancelled. To be able to continue to care for our patients and make sure they did not feel abandoned, Hennepin quickly ramped up virtual care, including telemedicine and live video visits. Within 48 hours, Dr. Deepthi Pandita and her informatics team created a telehealth service, answering patients' emails through an electronic medical records portal. Three weeks later, the service was fully running with added video and audio capabilities as well as links to video visits in Somali and Spanish.



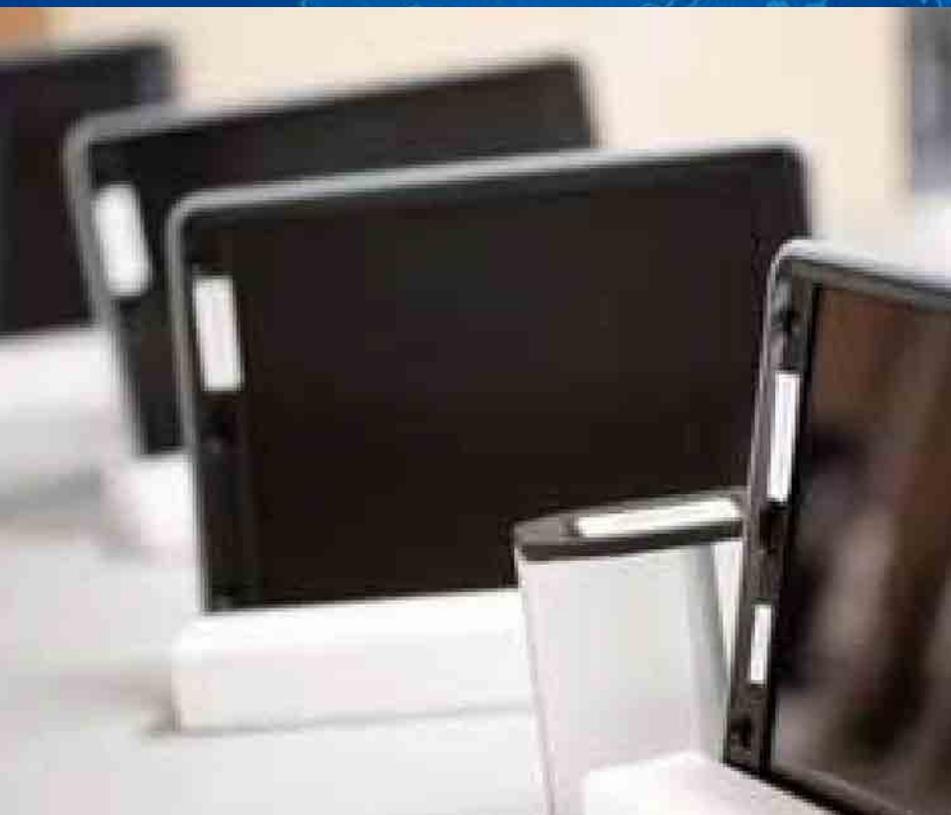
## Security

An unprecedented pandemic also calls for unprecedented efforts to maintain a safe, secure environment for patients and employees. This meant new security protocols had to be developed and executed in a matter of days.

Security personnel had to react quickly to new guidelines that were put into place around PPE and, perhaps the most challenging issue, visitor guidelines.

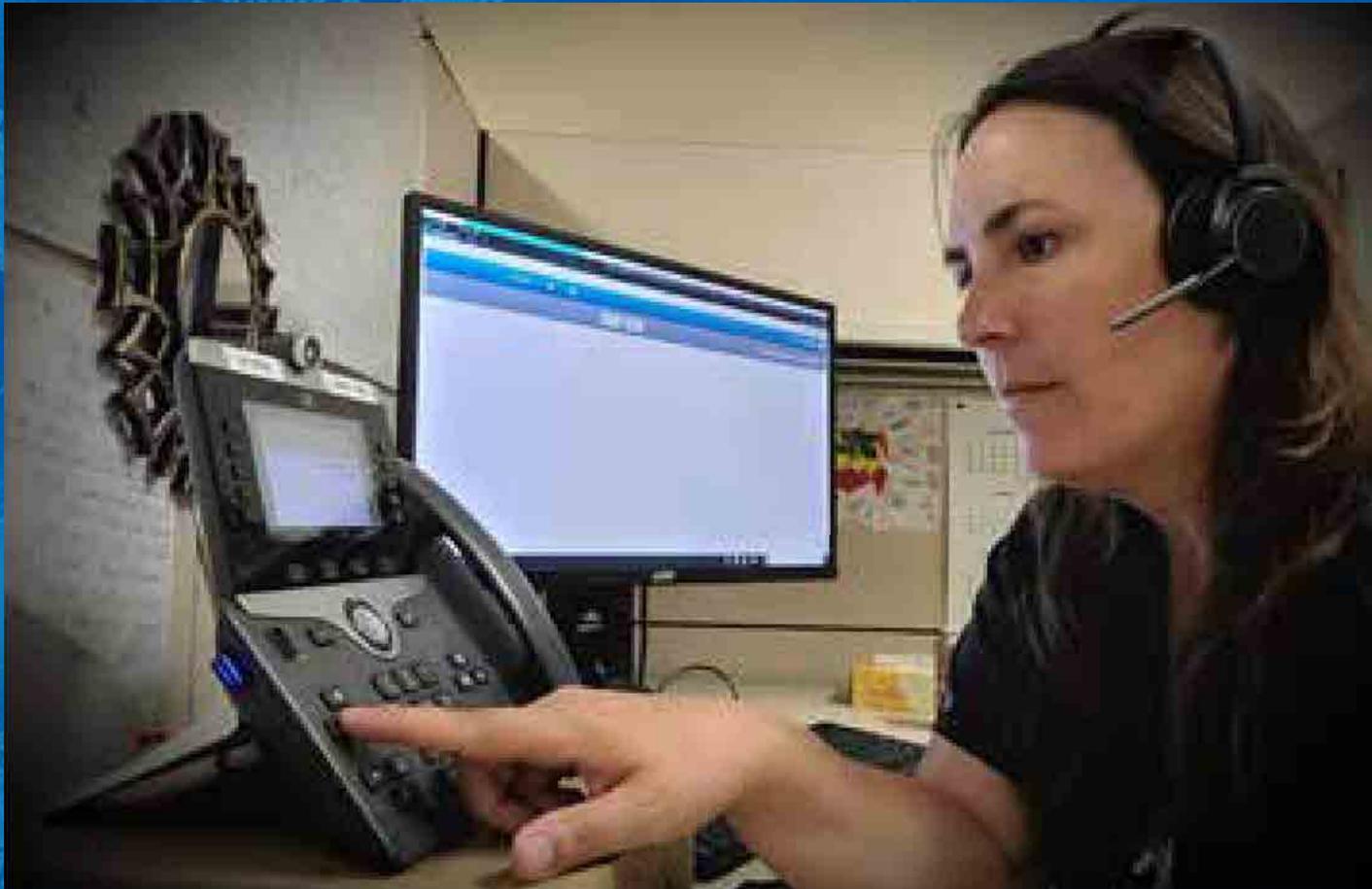
“It was a huge change and it happened quickly,” said Sergeant Jose Luna. “We had to lock things down and not allow any visitors. It was hard to tell families that they couldn't visit, but I tried to always do it in a way that shows I understand and I care. I try to put myself in their place and think, 'If that was my family how would I want to be treated and made to feel better?'”

Security personnel put in long hours closing down some entrances and making sure the hospital remained a safe place for patients and employees alike.



# COVID-19

# GETTING READY FOR A PANDEMIC



## Interpreters

When you serve a diverse population, preparing for a pandemic requires a multicultural approach. On a concrete level, this presented a problem figuring out how to communicate with patients and families who speak another language.

Hennepin Healthcare interpreters are used to working in a hybrid model where they are in patient care areas, working alongside doctors and nurses, for many patient care situations. As the coronavirus spread, they knew this would have to change.

Suddenly interpreters had to transition to all virtual visits, speaking with patients, families, nurses and doctors over a screen.

“It was quite sudden and at first we were told we could only go on the floor in emergencies, for stabilization, and then we had to wear all the PPE,” said interpreter Gina Testa. “It takes getting used to, whether we’re wearing masks or we’re on a screen, trying to talk people through a difficult and scary time.”

With a virus like COVID-19, interpreters took on another role, helping alleviate the isolation and loneliness of patients who couldn’t have any visitors. By preparing early and adapting to the challenges, they were able to be a source of comfort for patients in the time of their greatest need.

# CELEBRATING THE INCIDENT COMMAND CENTER

These individuals committed the extra hours, adrenaline, and stress to already filled work days, to create an ever-ready Incident Command Center. We celebrate their unfaltering leadership in response to COVID-19.

Fred Ames	Karin Meier
Sheyanga Beecher, CNP	Katherine Miller
Brian Bellicot	Richard Millerbernd
Megen Boysen	Susan Olson
Phillip Brooks	Mike Robertson
Doug Brunette, MD	Geoffrey Roe, CCRN
Julie Curti	Susan Roeser
Caitlin Ecess-Radtke, MD	Sara Rose, RN
Charles Esler	Marty Scheerer
Laura Gary, RN	Kendra Schmidt
Caren Gaytko, RN	Scott Schofield
Chris George	Joseph Strangfeld
Molly Gust	Matthew Sweet
Tara Gustilo, MD	Jessica Sylvester
Dan Hallberg	Denise Taber
Doug Hanson, MD	Paul Trudeau
Jennifer Hauff	Luis Valadez
Tom Hayes	Lindsay Van Dyke, RN
Beth Heather, RN	Saranya Vessey
Mark Hill, MD	Meghan Walsh, MD
Amy Hoberg, RN	Susan Walters
Brian Howard, PharmD	Jackie Zurn
Karen Hoybook	
Molly Jacques	
Lori Johnson	
Christene Jolowsky	
Seth Jones	
Aneetha Kabaleeswaran	
Marianne Knutson	
Becky Kohler	
Dana Langness, RN	
Michele LeClair, MD	
Tom Lyon	
Josh Markfort	
Bill Marks	
Melissa McKay, RN	



## Hennepin Healthcare's Executive Leadership Team

Jennifer DeCubellis, Chief Executive Officer  
Emily Bloomberg, Chief Operating Officer  
David Hilden, MD, VP, Medical Affairs and President of the Medical Staff  
Dan Hoody, MD, Interim Chief Medical Officer  
Derrick Hollings, Chief Financial Officer  
Tonya Jackman Hampton, Chief People and Culture Officer  
Kelsey Lawson, Chief Compliance Officer  
Megan Walsh, MD, Chief Academic Officer

# HERO PROFILES



**Luis Valadez, Senior Director of Supply Chain**

“I love my team and I am proud of the way they signed up for work that they had never done before. I had people volunteering to assemble testing kits. Contract specialists were helping source masks. Our leadership team was at the dock helping bring in beds and sterilizing equipment. There are no silos when we are working through a pandemic.

We have had to get outside of our comfort zones to make sure the clinical staff is comfortable with their safety when they are stepping into a room with a patient. That’s the urgency and the responsibility that we feel every day.”



**Jill Carter, Exercise Physiologist/  
Cardiac Rehabilitation and  
“PPE Buddy”**

“When my normal outpatient duties were taken away, I asked myself, ‘What can I do?’ I felt a need to contribute even in the chaos. We’re used to helping people every day and it didn’t feel right to not be involved when I could do something to help at my hospital.

I got trained on how to help people with PPE and I went to the units with the COVID-19 patients to make sure all the doctors and nurses knew what to do to protect themselves.

People are putting themselves in harm’s way for patients and they’re so busy. I can help them remember to do things like tuck their cuffs into their gloves and put on their eye shields. I was worried at first people would see me as intruding and telling them what to do but people are so appreciative and collaborative. We’re all under the gun so let’s get through it.”



**Thomas Wyatt, MD, Medical Director - Emergency Department**

“Putting on personal protective equipment is uncomfortable. It gets very warm and it makes it challenging to communicate. Masks, gowns and face shields can be barriers as you are working quickly to care for patients. But when our team gathers together and we’re putting on our PPE, it fosters a sense of teamwork. We game plan together and we look out for each other.

In many ways COVID-19 is presenting us with challenges we have never dealt with before. At the same time, seeing how people respond has been inspiring. Yes, we’ve seen very sick patients. But the professionalism and commitment I’ve seen shows that we are more than up for the challenge.”

# HERO PROFILES



**Colleen Crampton, Director of Laboratories**

“This was like a slow moving tornado heading our way and we had to get prepared.

We had to think about equipment, logistics, supplies, and there were challenges nobody could have anticipated. For example, all of the swabs that we need to conduct testing for coronavirus are made in Northern Italy. All of them. And suddenly Northern Italy was shut down.

Our team is full of problem solvers. We moved quickly to make sure we had the staff in place, the supplies we needed, and the knowledge about how to get testing done. We were one of the leaders in the state in getting our testing set up and available quickly.

I wasn't surprised by this because we believe in Hennepin Healthcare's mission: serving underserved populations... serving everyone.

We knew we just needed to get this done.”



**Nicole Grimlie, RN, Senior Staff Nurse - Emergency Department**

“When you're working in a stabilization room it is crowded. It can get hot and you're there for multiple hours at a time. Wearing the PPE, the N95 masks, you don't really get deep breaths so you can start to feel light headed. It's difficult to hear and people's voices are muffled.

It's been difficult but we have a strong teamwork approach and it's become even stronger. We do game planning and preparation beforehand. We work on clear and concise communication. We even try to find humor and make each other smile. We all come from different backgrounds but we come together as a team.

I'm proud that, even with all the challenges, we're still all focused on compassionate care.”



**Catherine Gonzales-Klang, Interpreter**

“It's definitely hard as an interpreter to have to do so much remotely. I sit in my office most of the day looking at a screen and trying to help when usually I'm walking around and working in person with patients and the staff. It's very isolating.

Usually the remote connection goes well, but there are times it's more difficult, especially with elderly patients. One of my first patients with COVID-19 had to be intubated and was sedated and I was just trying to explain to her what was going on.

Sometimes, particularly when the patient is having a hard time breathing, I have to take a moment after a call to try to calm myself, stay strong, and not cry.”



**Jose Luna, Security Officer**

“I was born and raised in New York so when everything started happening I got to be so nervous about whether I’d be able to see my family. Would things ever get back to normal and be like they were before?”

Then I saw the way people stepped up and showed how much they cared about each other and the work we do. We all play a part and we’re all important pieces of the family. So even when we have to do things like change visiting policies and keep people apart, we’re doing it in a way that shows we understand and we’re there for the families.

We’re all part of a big family and that’s helping us do what’s needed to keep everyone safe.”



**Paul Trudeau, Operations Manager**

“We knew how important it was to get a COVID testing clinic set up and ready very quickly. It had to be separate from inpatients and close to the outside so we could easily get patients in and out. We got to work and turned the whole thing around in two days.

That’s how we’ve managed through this whole thing. Everyone pulls together because this is what we need to do.

When this is over people will remember the support we gave each other, the relationships that we developed across departments. It reminds us that we’re all here for the same reason: to treat the ill and make sure everyone is safe.”



**Fedlu Awol, Medical Technologist**

“My wife is a pharmacy technician working with COVID patients and we have two school-aged kids. We talk about it a lot and we take precautions. My kids know when I get home there is no hugging until I change first and get washed up. It’s gotten to the point that my kids ask me if I’ve washed to make sure.

I know I’m not particularly at risk at work. The virus isn’t going to jump out of the test tube and I have the PPE that I need. I’m probably more at risk going to the grocery store. Still, I think about it and there is some fear and uncertainty.

My kids are supportive. If I’m feeling bad because I couldn’t help with their homework they tell me, ‘Don’t worry. You’re saving lives.’”

# MEDICAL

*Hennepin Healthcare is a leader in medical education, attracting learners from around the nation. Nearly half of all physicians working in Minnesota received some sort of training at Hennepin. Early in this crisis, we decided that preparing tomorrow's physicians requires us to train them for the real world, and we saw the pandemic as an important part of their education.*

*As a result, we did not pull back our resident trainees. Instead, we taught them how to navigate the unknown, to learn on the fly, and most importantly how to keep themselves, and their patients safe. Our role as a teaching hospital in this community is to prepare tomorrow's workforce for anything that comes their way -- including the next novel virus or even the next global pandemic.*



## **Kofi Badu Fosu, MD, General Surgery Resident**

“Suddenly patients were defining for themselves what was elective, emergent or necessary to do during COVID. We’d see more acute complaints because people were scared to come in and they would wait until it was an emergency. Even getting people in for follow up visits was difficult. We had to adapt and figure out what we could handle over the phone. We were able to do some of our follow-up work from home.

It was one of the most unique times I could imagine but we learned to be flexible, to get things done with the resources we had, adjusting and being open minded. For me, one element I had to think about was my shaving habits because beards can prevent a good seal on the N95 masks. That’s when I started to cut my beard short.

As scary as it’s been it hasn’t made me question my career. I’ve realized I love it too much to question it!”

## **Grace Braimoh, MD, Internal Medicine Resident**

“It’s hard to explain to family members just how severe the illness is when they can’t come in and see for themselves. How do I explain that a patient can’t leave his bed or walk even three steps without his oxygen dropping? How do I help a husband understand why his wife has to be admitted to the hospital when she was feeling fine just a couple days ago?

I’ve had so many conversations with family members about intubation and what their wishes are if their loved one takes a turn for the worse. These discussions are happening every day. I’ve done this thousands of times but every time feels like the first.”



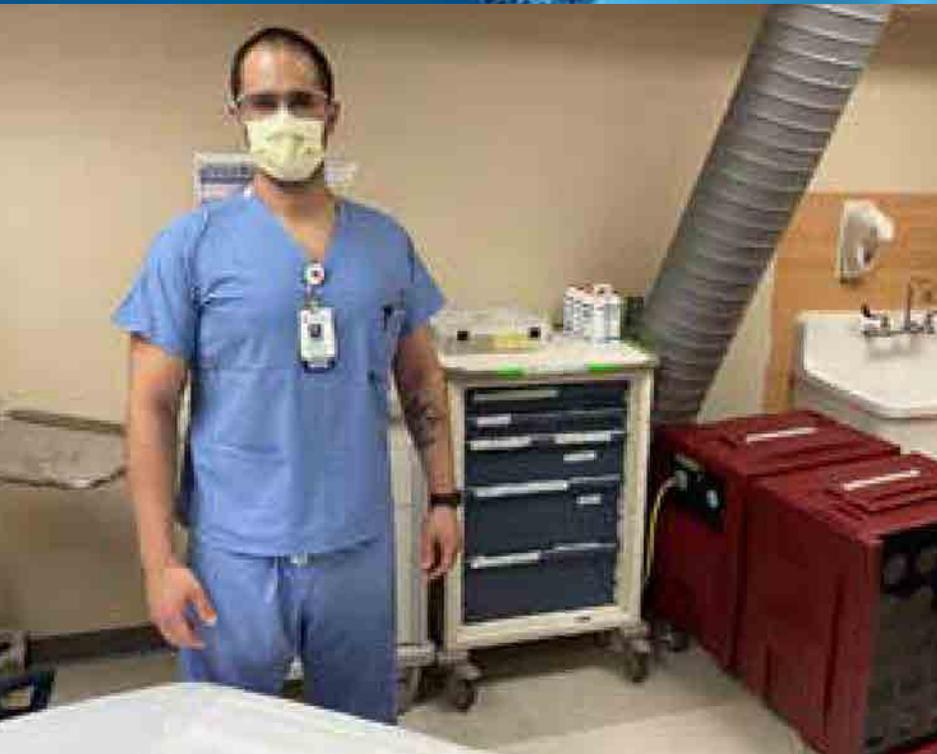
# EDUCATION

**Natalie Stoltman, MD, Family Medicine Resident**

“So many things in our lives have been taken away. They seem like little things but they add up. Going out to the orchestra, watching Vikings games, going out with friends... even interactions at work. We wear masks all day so you miss seeing a smile on someone’s face when you greet them.

When you’re stripped of the non-verbal communication, you still find ways to connect. Even a simple nod from someone can spur you on.

There are so many demands on us right now. We look for the little bright spots that can help you through the afternoon.”



**Aaron Robinson, MD, Emergency Medicine Resident**

“I remember the first case I saw, an elderly patient came through the front door and was so short of breath he couldn’t talk. I knew right then COVID was here to stay and would change life as we know it.

Working in the Emergency Department, we are used to running toward trouble and helping those who need it the most. As we watched the pandemic spread we knew we were going to see the sickest patients. It’s definitely fear inducing, worrying about PPE and knowing we’re on the front lines. But it’s also a unique and interesting challenge and a time to step up.”



## FROM SAILS TO FACE SHIELDS

When the coronavirus started to hit Minnesota, Tim Carlson realized his company could help. Carlson is the owner of Sailcrafters, which makes and repairs sails. When he heard about shortages in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health workers, Carlson rallied his employees and friends to start making face shields using the plastic material in his shop.

An ex-Marine, Tim drew on his training to quickly assemble a team to figure out how to rapidly produce this rare PPE item at the time. He secured donations from friends, came up with a simple design that didn't require any sewing, and with the help of other business partners started producing face shields.

The team of volunteers was able to complete a box of 50 face shields in as little as an hour. Between March and July, 26,000 Sailcrafter face shields were produced and distributed for free to more than 150 different facilities, including Hennepin Healthcare.



*When pandemic restrictions asked the public to shelter in place, it fueled a creative level of generosity. People discovered new talents and innovative ways to support healthcare workers on the frontlines. Individuals sewed cloth masks and used 3D printers and sailboat material to create face shields. Distilleries started producing hand sanitizer. A teenager donated her overseas trip money. Even as community members were forced to stay at home, they found ways to help.*





# Why I Give

My summer trip to Israel with United Synagogue Youth was cancelled due to the pandemic. It was an adventure I was really looking forward to. But it didn't take long to realize there was another purpose for the money I saved. I was watching the news one day and was struck by how little our healthcare workers were being supported for their dedication during this crisis. There was an

image of a parade of protesters, angry about being told to stay home, being blocked by doctors and nurses. It was such a powerful photograph and really moved me. I realized how fortunate I was to be able to stay at home, safely with my family, while healthcare workers were isolating from their own children and risking their lives to take care of others. The healthcare

workers at Hennepin Healthcare are working so incredibly hard. They should know there are a lot of people out here supporting them, loving them, and grateful for what they are doing.

## **That is why I give.**

Ella Roether, 15 years old

# HOPE AND SUPPORT

## THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY

### **Theresa Pesch, President Hennepin Healthcare Foundation**

Many people will remember 2020 as a year of chaos, fear, and uncertainty. We've shared an experience that has challenged us and pushed us to our limits. Yet, there's another side of 2020 that gives me confidence brighter days are ahead. I take comfort that, when faced with an unprecedented challenge, we were able to respond in an unprecedented way.

To be sure, the coronavirus pandemic continues to be devastating to patients and families around the world. We are being relentlessly tested and confronted with sometimes unanswerable questions. We are dealing with fear, isolation, and tremendous loss and we are still not sure when it will end. So it is even more remarkable to see the way people have held on to hope and stepped forward to make a difference.

I believe that hope in life is what drives generosity. What I witnessed as COVID-19 began to move into our community is that the virus didn't extinguish hope. To the contrary, hope remained strong. We saw so many people raise their hands and ask, "What can I do?"

From the earliest days of the pandemic, the Hennepin Healthcare Foundation had to move quickly to help. Programs and initiatives that may normally take months to roll out often happened within a week. We collaborated across the system, tapping into leadership and front line workers, to understand what was needed and where we could make a difference.

In response, we created the Hennepin Heroes Fund, an initiative that gave donors a tangible way to directly impact Hennepin Healthcare's pandemic response. The resulting support from within the organization, from our board, and the community, allowed us to quickly support areas with critical needs. Immediately, we secured iPads to help patients with COVID-19 overcome isolation and connect with their families. We supported convalescent plasma therapy research by the Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute. We funded additional spiritual care support for staff members and purchased pulse oximeters to assist in-home COVID-19 monitoring.

Hennepin Healthcare is an asset to our community that is often overlooked or taken for granted. The response to COVID-19 helps illustrate our unique role in caring for this community, including those who are most at risk for the virus. The Foundation has made a point of capturing and sharing stories from the field, offering perspective and reflections from our healthcare heroes.

The more we bring the work of Hennepin Healthcare to the forefront, the more the community responds. When the cases started to grow and the stress levels rose, donors focused on positive actions they could take to provide hope and support. Contributions of PPE and food allowed our providers to focus on patient care while also taking care of themselves. When protests and social unrest swept through our community, donors not only helped support our plans to reopen the damaged East Lake Clinic, they contributed needed food and cleaning supplies for our displaced patients and residents in the neighborhood.

One of the most common themes we hear when talking with our staff is pride. They know if they don't step up to take care of the most vulnerable in our community, nobody will. They are proud to be in a position to make a difference. They are also moved by the support, encouragement, and appreciation they have received in return from you.

As the Foundation president, I am honored to support my team and to represent a community of donors that is rising to the challenge. Every act of generosity impacts the life of a patient, a family, or staff on the healthcare front lines.

This pandemic has shown how philanthropy can make a clear and vital impact on our community's health and safety. At a time when people could have withdrawn with fear, they choose to lean in to help. We know the need will continue and new challenges will arise, but we've seen proof that hope and generosity will win the day.



## 2020 Board of Directors

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Katie Severt

Chris Sherman

James Young

Deborah Yungner

## Our Mission

*We partner with our community, our patients and their families to ensure access to outstanding care for everyone, while improving health and wellness through teaching, patient and community education and research.*

# HEROES CAMPAIGN RESPONSE AND IMPACT

# RESPONSE



Suddenly shuttered from doing business, beauty salons, construction companies and dentist offices donated their supplies of gloves, sanitizers, gowns, and surgical masks. Calls from closed restaurants poured in with offers to bring in food to sustain the energy of healthcare providers and first responders. Without reservation, the Canopy by Hilton hotel opened its doors to shelter providers needing to isolate from their loved ones. A renaissance of crafts people also emerged from Minnesotans sheltering in place.



When COVID-19 hit our state in March, our doors could not open wide enough to accept the compassion and generosity of the community. Families, co-workers, and businesses did not hesitate to support our healthcare heroes on the frontlines. The public's early personal and professional sacrifices slowed the spread and allowed our hospital to prepare.

As the months pass and the intensity of the disease rises and falls, the public's compassion remains steady, allowing us to be nimble and address emerging needs as they surface.



# IMPACT

AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

**\$29,132,371**  
in grant awards addressing  
COVID-19 efforts



**1,000,000**  
items of Personal Protective  
Equipment (PPE)



**20,965**  
nourishing meals



Isolated respite for **69**  
frontline heroes



Food & supplies for **1,200**  
patients of East Lake Clinic



**\$960,000** contributions  
to the Hennepin Heroes Fund,  
HHRI Plasma Study and  
OB/GYN support.



- Equipment/Supplies: cell phone chargers, safety glasses, patient flow items for security, and technology for virtual care
- Mental health and wellness services including the Employee Wellness Center and the new Buddy Program
- Patient comfort bags for hospital inpatients isolated from visitors
- Pulse Oximeters for home monitoring of high risk patients
- Fully funded HHRI Convalescent Plasma Study
- Meals for homebound patients
- OB/GYN supplies to support virtual visits with pregnant moms: iPads, blood pressure cuffs and thermometers
- iPads and AngelView for virtual visits for families with babies in the NICU
- Access to Doula support for pregnant moms in and outside the hospital
- Launched Vaccine Mobile
- Technical equipment for virtual communication with patients and families by chaplains, interpreters, mental health counselors, and healthcare providers



# COMMUNITY CLINIC EXPERIENCE



*On March 16, for the first time in its history, Hennepin Healthcare closed all community clinics and hospital-based specialty clinics. The growing pandemic forced the cancellation of nonessential, non-emergency healthcare appointments.*

*In response, clinic staff took on new challenges to assist with the pandemic, including managing virtual visits for patient care. Preparations focused on safely re-opening and offering the primary, preventative, and chronic healthcare services our patients depend on the clinics to provide.*

*In late April, clinics opened again, and Brooklyn Park, Richfield and Whittier clinics expanded their services to include viral testing for COVID, becoming a vital local resource for their cities' diverse populations.*

## COVID-19 Pandemic: Our Richfield Clinic Experience

When the Hennepin Healthcare neighborhood clinics went into “COVID mode,” routine visits were canceled. Providers worked from home at times and virtual visits were encouraged.

When we were able to open, we saw patients who were scared about coming to clinic fearing exposure to COVID-19. Patients with diabetes, asthma, heart disease and other chronic conditions were not coming in for routine care and labs. At the same time we heard that patients were avoiding the emergency room because of COVID-19 concerns. It was important for us to make sure our patients continued their routine care.

In early May, we became a COVID-19 testing site seeing walk-ins and testing up to 110 patients a day. Now we are seeing patients from all over the metro area. We see asymptomatic patients that were involved in protests and community rebuilding, children exposed to COVID-19 positive daycare workers, and some ill patients.

During this time, I have had some very intense discussions with patients, sometimes just listening, exchanging ideas, or providing information. Being able to calm someone's fears about COVID-19 and watching them relax makes my day. I encourage people to stay home if they are ill, practice proper hand hygiene, wear masks when out in public, and avoid large crowds, especially indoors. I feel appreciated more than ever when people say, “thanks for being here”, and “you guys are heroes.”



To learn more about COVID-19 testing and screening through Hennepin Healthcare, visit our website: [hennepinhealthcare.org/covid19testing](https://hennepinhealthcare.org/covid19testing). Current Hennepin Healthcare patients have walk-in, call or evisit options via MyChart. Non Hennepin Healthcare patients must call **612-873-2922** to register. Check your insurance for coverage. Wait times at each clinic will vary.

**Brooklyn Park Clinic**

7650 Zane Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

**Richfield Clinic**

790 West 66th Street  
Richfield, MN 55423

**Whittier Clinic**

2810 Nicollet Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

**Viral Screening Clinic**

(downtown campus)  
900 South 8th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

*Excerpt from the July 29, 2020 Here for Life Blog by Dr. Dana Rae Barr, a family medicine doctor at Richfield Community Clinic.*



Note: photo taken before the pandemic

# Why We Give

## Skylark Cleaners

### THE CLEANEST WAY TO SAY THANK YOU

When we realized early on how much COVID would impact the daily routines of healthcare workers, we wanted to show our appreciation for their sacrifice. We figured we could eliminate one little chore to make their lives easier.

Little did we know that in four months we would help so many people. Since our free wash and fold

service included complimentary home pickup and delivery, we had opportunities to thank these super heroes face-to-face. So many customers commented that having their laundry “drawer-ready” was such a time saver. Time they could spend with family or resting or tackling something else.

As a small business, we feel so thankful to be able to give back when we can. We felt called to give because of our wonderful patient experiences over the years. All four of our children were born at

Hennepin Healthcare. We are patients and despite COVID restrictions, making an appointment and getting into the building has been very easy and convenient for us. My General Practitioner is fantastic – she knows me, knows my family and is very warm and professional. We cannot say enough good things about Hennepin Healthcare.

### That is why we give.

Andrew and Nina Gaspard,  
Skylark Dry Cleaning

# The Gift of ECMO: Saving lives during the pandemic

Three years ago, guests attending the Foundation's Light Up the Night gala, contributed money to purchase additional ECMO machines and to train more staff to use them. They had no idea this act of generosity would prove so critical in a pandemic.

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) is a treatment in which heart and lung functions are temporarily supported using a machine that oxygenates blood, removes carbon dioxide, and pushes oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. It's often called a "rescue therapy" used for critically ill patients when all other methods of treatment have failed. Doctors at Hennepin Healthcare can deploy this system in minutes at the patient's bedside.

In normal years the use of ECMO is fairly rare. In 2020, it has become a critical option.

"In the past months, ECMO has been an essential intervention for critically ill COVID-19 patients who meet therapy criteria. When COVID-19 patients become so ill with pneumonia that we can't safely support them with a ventilator any longer, ECMO becomes an important option to save their life," said ECMO Medical Director, Dr. Matthew Prekker. "Patients with COVID-19 may need to be supported with ECMO for weeks at a time, and there have been a number of cases this year where our patients would have certainly died without it."

In July, Hennepin Healthcare's ECMO Program received the Award for Excellence in Life Support - Platinum Level, the highest designation level given by the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO). This award recognizes programs worldwide that distinguish themselves by having exceptional personnel, procedures, and systems in place to support critically ill

patients with ECMO while also advancing the exciting science in this area.

"To receive this prestigious recognition in the midst of an incredibly busy season really means a lot to our team and the entire hospital, and is a testimony to everyone's outstanding work," concludes Dr. Prekker.



# 75%

*Our survival to hospital discharge is 75% among patients with COVID-19 pneumonia who had veno-venous ECMO support. This is above the international average.*

A photograph of a patient lying in a hospital bed, partially covered by a blue blanket. The patient's head is visible on the left. To the right of the bed, there is a large piece of medical equipment, likely a ventilator, with a large screen displaying green waveforms. Above the bed, several monitors are mounted on a stand, showing various data. The room is brightly lit, and the overall atmosphere is clinical.

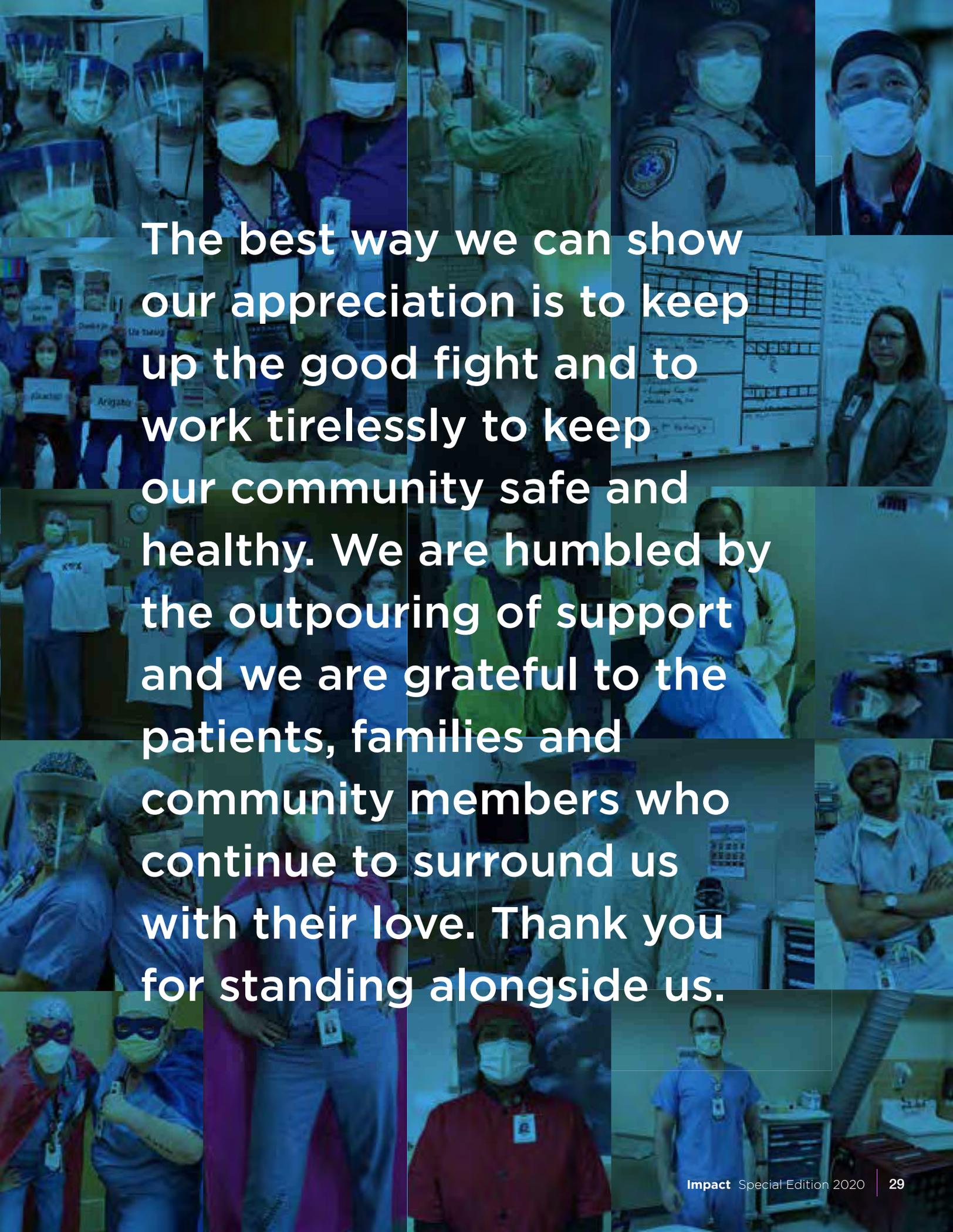
## TRIFECTA OF CRITICAL CARE EQUIPMENT

Dialysis to the right. ECMO in the middle.  
Ventilator to the Left.

Hennepin Healthcare participated in a Metro Critical Care Collaborative to gain consensus with other healthcare systems on the supply of critical equipment, protocols for its use, and staffing and space allocations for Intensive Care Units.







The best way we can show our appreciation is to keep up the good fight and to work tirelessly to keep our community safe and healthy. We are humbled by the outpouring of support and we are grateful to the patients, families and community members who continue to surround us with their love. Thank you for standing alongside us.

By the time the first cases of COVID-19 started showing up in Minnesota, Hennepin Healthcare employees had done their homework. They read the accounts from the places that had already been hit by the pandemic. They connected with colleagues who had treated COVID-19 patients. They did everything they could to be ready.

Then, the patients started to come in. Soon it became apparent we were dealing with something that hadn't been experienced before.

The first few days and weeks the Hennepin Healthcare staff operated

on adrenaline. They ran directly toward the challenges and did everything they could to find solutions. They tried to stay ahead of the curve, or at least in a place where the wave of patients wouldn't overwhelm the system.

Adrenaline can only last so long. When it wore off there was still a difficult reality to address. Waves of COVID-19 patients were continuing to come in. People needed testing, not only in the hospital and clinics but out in the community as well. There were no proven treatments to help patients. Perhaps most sobering was the heartbreaking

isolation and loneliness among patients who had to be quarantined for safety. This placed added burden on already overworked caregivers who had to fill that void and help patients and their families as they wrestled with this unrelenting virus.

The pandemic is proving to be a test of endurance. Staff members have turned to each other for strength and support that can only be borne out of an unprecedented shared experience. Challenge and change have become the "new normal" in health care as we hope to get the virus under control.

# REALITY SETS IN CARING FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS





### Medical Intensive Care Unit

The Medical Intensive Care Unit quickly became ground zero for the surge in COVID-19 patients. The unpredictable nature of the virus placed added stress on the team. They saw that even patients who seem to have mild cases can suddenly need life supporting care.

“The atmosphere in our unit changed basically overnight,” said Laura Miller, Nurse Manager of the Medical Intensive Care Unit. “When we started to see COVID patients you could feel the difference right when you walked in. It wasn’t so much the numbers, it was the acuity. People were so much sicker and it was happening so quickly.”

Staff had to work hard to keep on top of new regulations and procedures about both treatment and infection control. Restrictions on visitors required new models for keeping families informed about their loved ones. Nurses often had to hold up iPads during end-of-life situations to allow family members to say “goodbye.”

The nature of this pandemic is adding a great deal of stress to an already difficult job. Team huddles have started to include spiritual care and psychiatric support. As the COVID cases ebb and flow, the team is continuing to innovate and improve to be sure they are ready for the long haul fighting this pandemic.

### Spiritual Care

The intense and uncertain nature of COVID-19 has taken a toll on patients and families and on the Hennepin Healthcare staff. This has made the role of the Spiritual Care team even more vital in helping people process and cope.

The team members have worked hard to meet the growing demand, but providing spiritual care in the time of COVID presents its own unique challenges. Infection control restrictions and video conferencing don’t create an ideal atmosphere for addressing patient and staff needs.

“PPE, distancing and all the distractions are really difficult. You can’t hear and see people as well. They can’t pick up on my voice and my expressions either,” said Chaplain Steve Grove. “This is my new school now. I’m learning every day and I’m going to figure this out. There are stages of grief as we work toward acceptance of this reality but we buck up and do the best we can, and I know that there are joys in the new way as well.”

As the pandemic continues, the Spiritual Care team will continue to be asked to rise to the challenge even as they are adapting to this long and uncertain journey.



# CARING FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS



## Emergency Medical Services

The murder of George Floyd, along with the protests and unrest that followed, created a volatile mix in the middle of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. This placed Hennepin's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedics in a particularly difficult position.

Suddenly, as first responders, paramedics were put into the fray of the protests, violence, and distrust that many people in the community had related to law enforcement. At the same time, paramedics had a responsibility to not only respond to calls but to do so in a way that protected themselves, patients and households from the spread of the virus.

"Our mindset has had to change," said paramedic Becky Kopka. "There are things that are always on our minds like, 'Are we prepared?' or 'Did the caller provide all the right information to dispatch?' We're rethinking everything as we walk in and we are using caution for everyone's safety."

As with any emergency, EMS workers jumped into the fray quickly, putting patient care first. The combination of social unrest and the pandemic put that resolve to the test in a new way and EMS responded once again.

## Clinical Research

While a COVID-19 vaccine is often presented as the path out of this pandemic, in reality the development of better treatments and cures is the shortest path to saving lives.



To that end, the Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute (HHRI) is collaborating with the Mayo Clinic on a study looking at the use of convalescent plasma as a therapeutic treatment for seriously ill COVID-19 patients.

HHRI is uniquely positioned to advance this research, combining acclaimed clinical research capabilities with expertise in critical care, particularly focusing on under-served populations. Convalescent plasma has shown promise in treating other severe respiratory viruses such as influenza. The COVID-19 research involves having patients who recover from the virus donate plasma that can then be given to infected patients. The hope is that the antibodies in that plasma will provide healing benefits to these critically ill patients.

The Hennepin Healthcare Foundation is fully funding HHRI's convalescent plasma research, working to unlock promising cures to save lives.



# CARING FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS



As the general public was placed on lockdown to control the coronavirus pandemic, there was another group of workers who didn't have that choice. Environmental services, food service and facility workers were asked to continue their roles as essential employees at Hennepin Healthcare, putting themselves on the front lines of patient and staff safety.



## Essential Workers Keeping Everyone Safe



# ESSEN

Workers in Environmental Services play a central role in preventing the spread of the virus. Guidelines for cleaning and sterilizing spaces change constantly as scientists learn more about disease transmission. Crews have had to make adjustments to protect themselves and to ensure the safety of staff and patients.

Facility workers have also had to make quick adjustments to comply with critical safety needs. Whether it is addressing airflow issues in isolation units or reacting to power outages, the team knows they don't have the luxury of time during a pandemic.

"There are many times when I get home from a long day and something happens and I turn around and go right back to work," said Fred Ames, Facilities Director. "We keep the systems going that keep patients safe and keep them alive. So we never really leave our work behind."

Similarly, Food Services employees saw significant changes due to the pandemic, and they had to adjust accordingly. Workers couldn't go

into patient rooms to consult on diet and nutrition, so they developed workarounds talking with patients over the phone, teaming with nurses, or using video chats. They also had to work on sourcing high quality, healthy foods as some distributors started shutting down or curtailing options.

"It was a hard adjustment but I realize I'm essential for a reason and we need to push through," said

Matthew Sweet, Food Service Manager. "If you're not eating, you're not healing, so it was important for us to keep working to make a difference however we could."

These essential workers demonstrate how pandemic response is a total team effort. If we're going to get past this crisis, everyone needs to understand their role and their importance in preventing the spread of COVID-19.



# NTA



**John Sylvester, Paramedic**

"I think my approach to being a paramedic has changed largely due to my own anxiety about the coronavirus. I feel like I have gone through what amounts to a grief process in the last few weeks. I have been angry about it, I have been anxious about it, and I have settled largely on acceptance.

As far as an impact on my family, I feel that with a newborn, there is an extra level of anxiety. It has been especially hard on our parents not being able to experience him like they had hoped. It has also obviously been difficult on my wife during her maternity leave, to be so isolated from her support structure outside of our immediate family. In some ways, being able to come to work and have what amounts to a hands-on impact on our local response to the pandemic is easier than staying at home with a newborn and being socially isolated."



**Yeshi Sherpa, Inpatient Phlebotomist**

"The PPE makes my job a lot harder. The masks can make my glasses fog up which is bad when you're drawing blood and you need to see the veins. My hands are rough and dry from washing them so often with alcohol. Going into each room requires extra time because we need to be so careful and take precautions.

I've seen people and how they are suffering. A lot of the patients want to talk, but it can be difficult for them because they are coughing a lot. But I try to listen as I can, even though I want to get in and out quickly.

I think about how important it is to relieve the pressure on the nurses by doing what I can to help."



**Maratu Gerbi, Food Service**

"For 18 years I have worked at Hennepin Healthcare. Working during the pandemic is the most challenging of my career. Now instead of one job, we have to work in many different positions. We have to be flexible in order to help each other through this. In the café we have plastic barriers at the cashier and people no longer serve themselves at the buffet. We were closed at the beginning but now back serving staff, patients and their families.

Thankfully my family is good. My husband cares for our eight-year-old and helps with the schooling during the day. Everyone is concerned about my safety, but I have to work and be there for my co-workers. I miss gatherings with my family and friends, going to church. It's been lonely and I look forward to seeing people again."

# HERO PROFILES



**Shirlee Xie, MD, Hospitalist**

“It’s really hard to go into somebody’s room and tell them there’s nothing more you can do for them. They’re already terrified because they watch the news and they know the statistics. They know how sick they are.

To have to have that conversation with someone when they are scared and sick and alone in the hospital is heartbreaking.

We spend a lot of time on the phone calling family members. We set up zoom meetings so patients and families can at least see each other. I spend several hours a day calling family members. It’s been the hardest two months of my career.”



**Laura Miller, RN, Nurse Manager - Medical Intensive Care Unit**

“The sense of isolation on the unit is hard to get used to. Doors are closed. Nurses have to take time to put on protective gear just to go in and see a patient. Patients are separated from their families. There are tragic stories of patients who are having end-of-life conversations over an iPad or on a phone because their families can’t be with them.

Sometimes we find ourselves asking if this will end. Will we wake up from this nightmare? But until then, we continue working to help our patients. We don’t complain. We pull together because that’s what we do.”



**Steve Grove, Chaplain**

“The time that patients spend alone in the hospital can have an insidious effect. Otherwise healthy people are left alone to ponder the reality that life is short. COVID doesn’t care who you are and can hit anyone. I see many patients who are reflecting on their own mortality and the ‘Big Picture.’

In that situation, there’s an importance to seeing people, touching people, and simply being present. I’ve seen how meaningful it can be for a patient or family member to see a smile on their nurse or doctor’s face, for family to know their loved one is being cared for by someone with a heart.

We’ve had to do video conferences, zoom meetings where we might have technical issues while a loved one is dying. It borders on the absurd at times but remarkably, people are so gracious in a way that I don’t know if I could be. Tragedy brings out the strength and goodness of people.”

# HERO PROFILES



**Sara Rose, RN, Senior Director of Critical Care**

“COVID patients are very ill... some of the most ill we’ve ever experienced. They require a lot of care. We’ve had to use more ECMO (a machine that takes over the role of a patient’s lungs and/or heart). We have even turned patients onto their abdomens while they are intubated to help them breathe better. It’s no small job, but we’ve saved some from dying that way.

At our morning huddles we try to celebrate the success stories... a patient who no longer requires intubation, someone who had been on ECMO for 52 days and is now doing well. These are victories for the team and patient and are important to recognize.

The mission of Hennepin Healthcare, it gets in your blood and your heart and you can’t abandon it.”



**Rene Cabrera, Maintenance Worker**

“Working in a pandemic has been very different. We all have to take a lot of precautions: handwashing, wearing masks, and social distancing. We try to follow the guidelines even when we are outside. People approach us all the time to ask directions to the testing clinics and other areas of the hospital and they come up close to us. So we have to wear our masks all the time. I think it makes people feel safe when they see us wearing masks, they know we are being careful for them.

At first my daughter was concerned that I would bring the virus home, especially because my son has asthma. The precautions I learned at work I have taken home with me, as an example to my family and to my neighborhood. I live among many Spanish speaking neighbors and they come to me for advice. I tell them the virus is real and to wear a mask.”



**Natalie Ikeman, Physician Assistant - COVID Home Monitoring**

“When we called patients with a COVID diagnosis there were a lot of tears, a lot of emotion shared in that moment of diagnosis. There were some people who felt like it was a death sentence. I learned to pause and give people time to react. Then we could start trying to answer all the questions that they had. For many of them their heads were spinning and we had to take a moment to breathe.

Going through this with people can get kind of dark, but I was lucky to have colleagues to reach out to and we tried to help each other. We have a buddy system to check in on each other and help give the support that we all need.”



**Jerry Hanlon, Senior Staff Nurse - Emergency Department**

“Every day when I go home I have to worry about whether I’ve been exposed and what I might be carrying with me. I’m around it all the time and each day might be the day that I catch it.

I haven’t thought about myself but I think about others. At the grocery store or at home with my husband, I do everything I can to be safe but I live with that constant fear. Every day is a new exposure for me, and I don’t want to be the one who spreads it to someone else.

That’s why the greatest support I get is from the people I work with and the camaraderie from others who are in the same situation. That’s life now. Work is the worst place to be and the best place to be, because it’s the only human contact we have for the duration of this pandemic.”



**Fred Ames, Director - Facilities and Operations**

“At first it was scary for everyone. I was concerned about bringing it home to my loved ones. I’m 66 years old. I have heart disease and I’m a cancer survivor. I’m at risk and don’t know how I’d fight the virus. But I get strength from what I learn at work and how we are all taking this challenge on and staying careful.

Every day is another chapter. There are challenges every day, not just during COVID. This time the magnitude is different but we have great teamwork and that’s a precious commodity that helps us solve problems and get things done.”



**Brenda Kennelly, Manager - Hennepin Healthcare’s Brooklyn Park Clinic**

“When we first divided the space and created the viral clinic, some people were scared to work there. We talked things through and everyone has calmed down. We’ve learned about proper PPE use and nobody working here has tested positive so that has helped. Now we feel like a well-oiled machine. We’re working together really well, patients understand what is happening and how things will work.

Health care is complex even in normal times and the pandemic has brought so many additional layers of complexity. I’m proud of how we’ve responded and come together for our patients.”



# PATIENT STORY | DR. PYAE

When Nyan Pyae, MD, began his Nephrology Fellowship at Hennepin Healthcare, it was an answer to a prayer. Like any other fellow, he looked forward to furthering his education with hands-on clinical experience and opportunities to participate in research at a nationally recognized teaching hospital. Eleven months later, Dr. Pyae's Fellowship was derailed when he became critically ill with COVID-19. Suddenly, the once-healthy 45-year-old father of two was in a fight for his life.

"I started feeling very tired, had a loss of appetite and a high fever," he explained. "So I got tested for COVID and it was positive. I quarantined myself and continued to feel sick with different symptoms and severity for several days before the shortness of breath began."

That's when Dr. Pyae started checking his oxygen saturations with a pulse oximeter he had at home.

"It showed my saturations were low, and I thought, 'that's not good at all,'" he said. "On May 27, my wife, Sunn Sunn, drove me to the emergency department and waited for me in the car. I was hoping to get supplemental oxygen to relieve my symptoms and go home."

Instead, Dr. Pyae was admitted to the ICU and shortly thereafter required a ventilator to support his breathing. It was the beginning of a 106-day hospitalization - the longest

COVID hospitalization on record in Minnesota at the time.

His journey to recovery was filled with ups and downs. He was intubated twice, was on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) for 26 days, and received every medication treatment available for the virus and its symptoms. Dr. Pyae was also put on dialysis when his kidneys failed, meaning he was being cared for by colleagues and mentors from his own Nephrology team, including Dr. Saugar Maripuri.

"Caring for Nyan when he was so sick in the ICU was one of the greatest challenges of my career but also the most rewarding," said Dr. Maripuri, the program director of the Nephrology Fellowship Program at Hennepin Healthcare. "You never wake up in the morning thinking that you will be dialyzing one of your close colleagues and friends, but I always focused on how I could help him get better one day at a time."

While Dr. Pyae's medical team worked around the clock to address his medical needs, his family's faith kept him strong. His twin 7-year-old daughters and other relatives and friends around the world prayed for his recovery every day. He believes the incredible care he received from the Hennepin Healthcare team, that he now calls his "second family," along with the support of prayer is why he's alive today.

Dr. Matthew Prekker, medical director for Hennepin Healthcare's ECMO program, was inspired by Dr. Pyae and his recovery. "With COVID, so many organs are failing," he explained. "We brought in just about every specialist we had on his case. After many challenges, it was beautiful to watch his body bounce back. For all they've been through, Nyan and Sunn Sunn are my heroes."

On Thursday, September 10, Dr. Pyae received a hero's sendoff from Knapp Rehabilitation when he was discharged home to his family. His colleagues and friends lined up along the hallway and cheered as he exited the unit. The moment was shared and went "viral" on social media.

"I feel very blessed for the love from my Hennepin family," reflects Dr. Pyae. "It was a very, very tough time. I missed my daughters' birthday. I missed my family a lot. On the other hand, I was very sick and I came back from death. I'm so grateful to be alive."

Dr. Pyae's resilience and determination continues to amaze as he pursues his Fellowship virtually while continuing his recovery from COVID-19, participating in lectures and presentations online in-between a vigorous therapy schedule.

*Photo credit: Star Tribune*

## Courtney Cushing Kiernat

We were moving into our new house when we got the call a parent never wants to receive. A good Samaritan was on the phone telling us that Quinn, our 12-year-old son, was hit by a car while biking home from a friend's house. He was unconscious and the ambulance was onsite. When the EMS asked what hospital we preferred, we asked what they thought based on Quinn's condition, and they replied "I would go to Hennepin." Best advice we ever received!

We were met at the ER entrance by a kind man, we would later learn was a chaplain. He explained what we would see when we walked into the ER. Quinn was surrounded by no less than ten nurses and doctors who were working in synchronicity to stabilize him. Quinn was saved by the amazing care he received at HCMC - and his bicycle helmet. As parents, in our own state of emotional shock, we were incredibly thankful for the chaplain and medical team, all of whom were Hennepin heroes. They guided us through Quinn's stabilization and recovery. Quinn is now a successful senior in college.

From that day forward, my family and I became donors and volunteers. We volunteer as a pet therapy team with Zelda, a great Pyrenees/Golden Retriever. We visit with EMS, knowing at some point we might provide comfort to the ambulance crew that helped save Quinn's life. I also serve on the board of the Hennepin Healthcare Foundation.

Hennepin Healthcare is our primary charitable organization that we contribute to because we want everyone, regardless of socio-economic status, to have the high quality care that our family has received. The staff at Hennepin Healthcare are truly healthcare heroes.

## That is why we give.

Courtney Cushing Kiernat and family, including their dog Zelda



# Why We Give



# STAYING TRUE TO OUR MISSION

Ensuring access to outstanding care for everyone is not just a statement in our mission, it is embedded in our DNA as a healthcare system. We take great pride in our role as the safety-net provider and we accept the profound responsibility this carries. The pandemic has exacerbated health disparities we so commonly see in our patient

population. Individuals and families are experiencing housing, food and unemployment insecurity at unprecedented levels. At the same time, the social inequities and systemic racism that has victimized communities of color has become more pronounced and more deadly. These are difficult times. Hennepin Healthcare is committed to staying

true to our mission. We are partnering with our community to make needed changes to earn and maintain the trust of the people we serve and to find creative solutions to make a difference.



# STAYING TRUE TO OUR MISSION



Taking a temperature before the COVID swab

## Community COVID-19 Testing

Not only did our labs ramp up quickly to provide rapid, accurate testing for Hennepin Healthcare patients, they also became a leading resource across the state for expertise, capability and some of the fastest test results. We opened dedicated testing clinics in our downtown Minneapolis campus and our Whittier, Richfield and Brooklyn Park community clinics. We also reached beyond our walls, understanding the importance of testing at-risk populations to contain the spread of the virus.

The foresight of leaders to acquire testing supplies allowed us to support other hospitals and to bring testing to congregate living environments like jails, nursing homes and homeless shelters. Our community paramedics and home healthcare nurses have a unique understanding of the importance of testing in providing equitable care and protecting vulnerable members of the community.

Since late April, they have held testing events at a variety of locations including: Higher Ground, The Glenwood, People Serving People, Cedar/Riverside public housing, and Salvation Army Harbor Light. All testing events have been a

partnership with Hennepin County Public Health, Minneapolis Public Housing, and MDH.

As of November 1, we have been able to test more than 100,000 people at our facilities and across our community.



## Pulse of the Pandemic

Between May 11 and June 12, 2020 Hennepin Healthcare and Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute conducted a phone survey with current patients. The goal was to understand their needs to help inform our continued response to COVID.

“We believe that this report shares the ‘pulse’ of the community during a time of uncertainty that will lead to positive work at both ends: caring for COVID and our patients’ basic needs at the same time. We know this is, in reality, two pandemics at once: the viral and the health inequities,” said Maria Veronica Svetaz, MD, MPH, and project committee member.

Nearly 400 adult patients reflected on their experiences with the arrival of COVID and its resulting social and economic impacts. Basic needs, also known as social determinants or drivers of health, are known to be the most influential factors impacting health. By addressing these needs, communities can more equitably improve health outcomes.



### Key findings include:

- **35%** of respondents worried about affording food. Spanish speaking (**58%**) and Black patients (**42%**) were disproportionately food insecure.
- **14%** reported being homeless at the time of the survey and **32%** were worried about being able to pay their rent/mortgage or other housing costs. Non-English speakers were the most likely to report worry about paying housing costs, with **53%** of Spanish speakers and **62%** of Somali speakers reporting concerns.
- The majority of respondents reported access to internet-connected smartphones (**89%**) and email (**81%**). Patients varied in their access to an internet-connected computer (**57%**), and 1 in 4 expressed challenges paying their phone bill (**26%**).
- Respondents were generally willing to use video visits (**72%**).

### Online ▶

The entire report is available at [hennepinhealthcare.org/basicneedssurvey](https://hennepinhealthcare.org/basicneedssurvey).



# STAYING TRUE TO OUR MISSION



## Prenatal Care

Having a baby is a cherished event. Not even a pandemic can take that away. However, staff and pregnant families were rightly anxious during the early months of the pandemic. Hennepin Healthcare typically sees 150 births per month. So how do you bring a new life safely into the world? A first step was to support as much prenatal care outside of the hospital and clinics as possible. Funding from a special campaign for OB/GYN allowed staff to purchase blood pressure cuffs, thermometers and iPads. This provided patients with the tools necessary for virtual check-ups and reduced potential exposures to COVID-19.

After birth, the Heroes Fund supported a camera system so family and friends, restricted from visits during the pandemic, could still see the new born baby and interact with mom and dad.

*“There is so much uncertainty caused by COVID, and so much that we cannot promise right now. But we CAN promise that we will be here for you when the time comes for you to give birth. We promise that we will do everything in our power not only to keep your family safe, but also to share in your joy and celebrate with you.*”

*Despite our face shields, we still see you. Though it may be over the phone, we still hear you. And despite our masks, we are smiling at you. We are here for birth, and we are here for life” – From the providers in the Birth Center of Hennepin Healthcare.*



## Vaccine Mobile

Early in the pandemic, families were understandably fearful of coming to the clinics for preventative healthcare services such as immunizations. Over the summer, childhood immunization rates began to plummet nationally and there was a looming risk of not just COVID-19 but also of a rise in vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and pertussis.

This concern prompted a unique partnership between pediatrics and paramedic staff members. The goal was to make sure that if children could not come to Hennepin Healthcare for essential vaccines, we could go to them. Thanks to contributions to the Hennepin Heroes Fund, they were able to launch the Vaccine Mobile in May, providing immunizations to pediatric patients at their homes.



“We wanted to be prepared for fall and to make sure when the cold and flu season started we were not facing two different worst-case scenarios, fighting COVID and preventable diseases,” said pediatric nurse practitioner, Sheyanga Beecher.

The Vaccine Mobile team sees toddlers, kindergartners and adolescents who are behind or due for their vaccines but whose families are otherwise reluctant or unable to be seen in clinic. It is equipped with the ability to provide all childhood vaccines while taking necessary safety precautions against COVID-19. In addition to providing vaccines, the team also comes to each home with cloth masks, books to promote literacy, and food bags for families in need.

“They brought the masks. They brought the equipment. It was very quick and professional and they were nice,” shared mom Dianna Jones.

After a successful pilot program with 131 patients served, the Vaccine Mobile is expanding its services. In addition to pediatric vaccines, all members of a household may receive the influenza vaccine. In addition, Mobile visits now include the homes of patients previously served at our East Lake Clinic.





## Rebuilding East Lake Clinic

Just imagine: no grocery stores, no post office, no pharmacies or mail delivery. The riots in the wake of the murder of George Floyd severely damaged and closed our East Lake Clinic along with many other stores and businesses in the neighborhood. This created a food and supply desert in the area that threatened to cause even more distress and hardship.

We faced an urgent need to help the 8,000 patients who relied on these local resources. Rapid response from donors enabled us to connect immediately with patients to provide food and hygiene supplies. Next we created plans for their continued healthcare including home visits, a partnership with UCare on an onsite medical bus, and transportation to temporary healthcare homes at Whitter, Richfield and St. Anthony clinics.

Committed to staying in the East Lake/South Minneapolis area, we look forward to opening our doors in 2021 at our new clinic location at 2215 East Lake Street, within the Hennepin County Human Services Center. In addition to allowing us to open up a new clinic in a timely way, this location provides easy access by public transit, free parking, and coordination with other public health services.

Together with our patients and community, we will create and fulfill a vision for how we can promote health and wellness in this vibrant new location.



# HERO PROFILES



**Danielle Robertshaw, MD,  
Internal Medicine – Behavioral  
Health and Housing Needs  
(at left in photo)**

“COVID presents different anxieties to at-risk populations. Even testing for COVID can cause stress because people are concerned that they might lose their housing or be ostracized if they get back a positive test result.

Every community you test is unique. We strive for consistency but we are constantly reminded that one size doesn't fit all.

I'm proud of the flexibility and creativity that has come out of this. The partnerships that we have formed and the approaches we've developed will have long-term benefits even after we've made it through this pandemic.”



**Rosemary Quirk, MD,  
Hospitalist and Internal  
Medicine Program Director**

“Working through this pandemic can definitely be exhausting. But was I ever afraid? No...not really.

This is a job that I signed up for. My single most important mission is to work in a safety-net health system, to provide care to vulnerable populations and to help the surrounding community.

I work toward those goals every day. We do an amazing job at Hennepin Healthcare, giving the best possible care even though we have fewer resources. During this incredible challenge with COVID-19 it's even more of a challenge. We are taking on all these new rolls and figuring out a way to do everything at once. I'm proud of how everyone has stepped up to do this work with such energy and pride.”



**Molly Jacques, Senior Director  
of Specialty Care**

“There's nothing like being on a team that can take on a challenge and take care of the most vulnerable in our community. We need to be open to everyone at any time, putting a priority on the needs of the community.

I saw our values in action. We put the needs of the patient over the needs of the system. It's our job to adapt to patients not the other way around. It was incredibly rewarding to be a part of it.”



**Caitlin Eccles Radtke, MD,  
Infectious Disease**

“When this started, I made a decision to stop visiting my parents and my sister’s family for fear of spreading the virus. My sister has four kids (a four-year old and almost 1-year-old triplets) and we’re all very close. It’s hard to be isolated from family. One day I stopped by to drop some things off for my sister and my nephew asked if I could come in and play. I told him I wasn’t able to right now because I didn’t want to bring in any germs. He said, sadly, “Auntie Caits, maybe you can come and play when the virus is gone.” Complete heartbreak.

We’re working so hard to protect patients and staff and the community as a whole. That mission keeps me going. But every now and then I have a moment where I stop and rest and consider what is happening, and I know there is an emotional side to this that we’ll be dealing with for a long time in the future.”



**Amy Mensch, Program Manager -  
Adult Psychiatry Clinic**

“With all the things happening in the world, it’s been a difficult and stressful time for everyone. Our resilience isn’t as great. Even as mental health professionals we’re struggling with many of the very same things that we’re reassuring patients about. Luckily, we all watch out for each other and try to find ways to help each other cope.

We also have been able to find silver linings. Patients have responded very well to telehealth. We haven’t had as many missed appointments and sometimes meeting people virtually in their homes allows for different insights and interactions.

It has absolutely been stressful, but a lot of good things are happening too. I’ve been proud of the many ways we’ve been able to figure things out and help our patients.”



# AN ELBOW BUMP IS NOT A HUG.

Time has passed since COVID-19 first barged in and visited unannounced.

It did not take all things at once, it gave some too, the gift of time and new routines, clean air and quiet fox-filled streets.

But like a guest who stays too long some novel things have now grown old.

I have repented my request for time less-structured, less routine.

I crave airport baggage lines, and earthy smells, unshowered bodies on metro buses.

I want to wait in line for a table to imbibe overpriced drinks with friends.

I want family to visit without fear that I may kill them.

I want a future imagined further out than next week.

I want spontaneous human contact; the resounding smack of high-fives doled out for meaningless accomplishment.

I want to bring some small physical comfort to your quarantined fevered room.

An elbow bump is not a hug.

When life's juicy earth-filled moments sprout, the milestones of life and death, new beginnings and disappointing ends the doppelganger elbow bump is revealed.

Its feckless insufficiencies laid bare.

When tears carve tracks on fleshy faces or laughter spills from joyful guts, I want a hug.

I want the feeling of your arms around me.

I want to smell the hops on your breath and wipe the snot from my arm left by your tears without fear of infection but rather with celebration of life lived, unsheltered, unrestrained, humanity embraced, Prometheus unbound.

I have not forgotten. I will not forget.

*This is an excerpt from a poem written by Steve Grove, a member of Hennepin Healthcare's Spiritual Care team. You can read full poem posted on our Here for Life Blog, May 13, 2020 at: <https://hereforlife.blog/an-elbow-bump-is-not-a-hug/>*



# FOOD FOR HEALING

Hospital food doesn't receive a lot of attention. However, with an Executive Chef in the kitchen and a team committed to customer service, Hennepin Healthcare's Food Service breaks through the common perceptions of flavorless fare. Their efforts receive industry awards from the International Food Service Manufacturers Association and accolades from patients for the nutritious and delicious meals. Enjoy the following recipe from their kitchen.

## Immune System Booster Coconut Chicken Curry

Yields 6 portions

6-4 ounces chicken breast  
2 ounces sesame oil  
½ teaspoon mustard seeds  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 large tomato, seeded and finely chopped  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon of fresh ginger, finely chopped  
1.5 tablespoon yellow curry powder  
1 ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric  
2 cups of chicken stock  
1-13 ounce can of unsweetened coconut milk  
1 each Thai pepper (optional)  
Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions:

Pan sear chicken breast and set it aside. Add onions, garlic, ginger and tomatoes. Cook in low heat for ten minutes. Add curry and turmeric powder then cook for two more minutes. Add chicken broth, coconut milk and chicken breast. Let it cook for about 20 minutes or until chicken breast can easily break apart.



## Sauté spinach

Yields; 6 portions

2 pounds of fresh spinach  
1 garlic clove, chopped finely  
2 tablespoons of sesame oil  
Salt & pepper to taste

### Instructions:

In a medium pan heat up sesame oil. Cook garlic until light brown. Add spinach and turn the heat off. Keep stirring the spinach until wilted.

### To Serve:

Place basmati rice in center of the plate, curry chicken on one side, spinach on the other. Sprinkle with fresh cilantro and enjoy!!

## Basmati Rice

Yields: 6 portions

2 cups of basmati rice  
4 cups of water  
Teaspoon of salt  
1 tablespoon of butter

### Instructions:

In a small stock pan heat up water, salt and butter. Rinse basmati rice and stir it in to boiling water. Turn the heat down to low, cover the pan and let it cook until soft, about 15 minutes.

**Note:** Basmati rice takes less water and less time to cook.





# RESILIENCY AND FOCUS

## MEETING THE CHALLENGES YET TO COME

*Photo Left to Right: Dr. David Hilden, Dr. Meghan Walsh, Dr. Daniel Hoody*

When Hennepin Healthcare leaders gathered in March to assess the pandemic, the challenge was clear. Finding answers was more difficult. “I’ve been practicing for 20 years and I’ve never had an illness that I haven’t had a textbook to go back to,” said Dr. David Hilden, Vice President of Medical Affairs and President of the Medical Staff. “We looked at each other saying, ‘Holy Cow, this is different than anything we’ve seen before.’ We also knew we needed to rise to the occasion.”

Decisions were made quickly to shore up resources and prepare for the first waves of COVID-19 patients. This included shutting down clinics and elective surgeries.

“That was the most poignant moment for me, when we were debating if we should stop doing what we do every day,” said Dr. Meghan Walsh, Chief Academic Officer. “We’re acute care. We’re trauma. But suddenly we were making these hard decisions and it was definitely a new day.”

“It was ‘Ready, fire, aim!’ We had to make decisions and go,” added Dr. Daniel Hoody, Interim Chief Medical Officer. “It was a big motivator for innovation. We have a whole bunch of patients, many who are vulnerable, who won’t be able to get care at other places. We needed to figure this out.”

Dr. Hilden said the collective response showed what the Hennepin Healthcare team is made of.

“Our staff and our colleagues were terrified at the beginning. We all were,” he said. “But courage is when you acknowledge your fear and you go ahead anyway. Our teams did that. Eventually that sense of terror was replaced by a sense of camaraderie that is helping us get through this together.”

The physician leaders agree the crisis is far from over and the worst may be yet to come. Still, they agree Hennepin Healthcare employees have shown they are up to the task.

“We’re full of heroes big and small,” added Dr. Walsh. “I love tapping into the wisdom of the crowd, seeing there’s a whole group of people who really care about this place and we come up with solutions that leave me thinking, ‘Yeah, they totally nailed this.’”

“We’re going to take learnings out of this that are not even related to COVID,” added Dr. Hilden. “We’ve had to get so creative and a lot of it’s going to be to our benefit long into the future.”

The doctors agree the key to Hennepin’s COVID-19 response has been remembering, over and over again, that every decision impacts a patient, a family and a community. While nobody can anticipate all the challenges ahead, they say the strength, resilience and focus the organization has shown so far will help everyone emerge even better on the other side.

Throughout this pandemic, our employees continue to deliver the best possible care and support despite a sea of challenges. This is really hard work. With no end in sight, it's taking a toll physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally.

Philanthropic donations have allowed us to offer a variety of mental health and coping resources including: an

employee wellness center, a telephone warm-line to connect with a mental health professional, team support calls for psychological support, expansion of spiritual care, and a Buddy Program which pairs staff to support each other with mental health check-ins.

"Humans need each other. Period," shared Buddy participant

Dr. Caitlin Eccles-Radtke. In especially stressful times it is critical to feel supported. This Buddy Program helps people who aren't used to leaning on others - lean on others. It normalizes asking for support. We can feel angry, stressed, frustrated, anxious, scared, sad, and overwhelmed. All are valid emotions in this unprecedented time."

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



# Sharing the caring

From Melbourne to Minneapolis, Dubai to Dallas, hundreds of thank you notes have been received from around the world through our Sharing the Caring website. Nine months into the pandemic, staff go back to them often to uplift their spirits and find brightness on the darker days.

The portal remains open if you are inspired to share your note of appreciation for those on the frontlines of healthcare. <http://hennepinhealthcare.org/thankyou>



**Mohammed**  
Bronx, NY

Thank you healthcare workers for keeping us safe during these tough times!



**Tanvi**  
Jaipur, India

Thank you for all that you are doing in this time! You have no idea how many lives you've saved and how many lives you've touched by simply showing up. Thank you for everything you do! Your compassion and dedication to the recovery of thousands of people will never be forgotten, and I hope you understand how remarkable you are.



**Vaishnavi**  
Delhi, India

I'd like to thank you for your service. I appreciate how people like you are working day and night for the citizens of your country, people you don't even personally know. It is remarkable that you are putting your own lives at stake. It is very difficult to find such amazing and selfless souls in today's world but you have proved that humanity still exists. Thank you so much! Stay safe.



**Jeilah**  
Tampa, FL

Thank you for being real-life heroes and doing your best everyday to support patients and their families. I wish you and your loved ones health and happiness today and forever. Your work is so important but it would not be possible without you.



**Geneva**  
St. Paul, MN

Thank you firemen, ambulance drivers, healthcare workers, and others that have been helping us through COVID, during this nerve-wrecking time. My dinosaur friend here sends you my "thank you."



**Zoe**  
Sacramento, California

Dear Healthcare Worker, We truly appreciate everything you guys have done to keep everyone safe and healthy during these times. Thanks for all your hard-work, dedication, and commitment. Keep up the good work! Sending love your way.



**Angelina**  
Eden Prairie, MN

Dear Healthcare Worker, Thank you so much for your sacrifices and tireless work during COVID-19. I will never know the extent that you have (and your family) had to sacrifice and everything you have had to go through to help people. You are appreciated and I admire your strength and courage. Hugs!



**Lisa**  
Minneapolis, MN

I recently gave birth at Hennepin and the experience couldn't have been better. Everyone was so wonderful, from the food service workers to the nurses and the midwives. Even though everyone was all covered in their PPE, you could still tell how much they cared and wanted us to feel at ease. This picture of Val and my baby just makes my heart melt every time I look at it. Thank you so much!



**Lahiri**  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Thank you for all you are doing, your dedication and efforts are forever going to be known and appreciated. The amount of time you spend helping others in need is truly inspirational and one day, I hope to do the same. Your kindness, generosity, and helpfulness is the best of traits. Keep being you and one day all your wants and needs will be fulfilled. Everyone you help is truly thankful for you, and I am too.



**Tatum**  
Edina, MN

Dear health care workers, Thank you for keeping us safe and thank you for putting our needs above yours. You've done such a great job, thank you.



## **Aileen Ahiskali – Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist**

“People keep reminding me to take care of myself and to focus on my own mental health through this. I really want to keep going and stay at it but I’m trying to make sure I don’t burn out because we’re not at the end yet.

I’m proud of the way we’ve come together and I’m confident that we will be able to handle anything that comes our way at this point.

There are times when I just think, ‘I am so over this pandemic.’ It’s exhausting. But really, you can’t let down. You have to show up and be present. I tell myself that I’m not giving up and I won’t let this get the best of me.”

Hennepin Healthcare Foundation is proud to highlight stories of our Hennepin Heroes on frontlines of caring for patients during COVID-19. Follow more Stories from the Field at: [hennepinheroes.org](https://hennepinheroes.org).

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# SUPPORT OUR HENNEPIN HEROES

[hennepinheroes.org](https://hennepinheroes.org)

We continue to answer the call for COVID-19 testing, care, and recovery; to respond to community unrest and trauma; and to provide daily healthcare and prevention. We are thankful for the outpouring of support from the community we are so proud to serve.