Voices from the Frontline

Standing together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

HCA Houston Healthcare Mainland colleagues stood united in prayer as they prepared to care for their first COVID-19 positive patient.
HCA Healthcare Colleagues,

Over the past months, our world has been faced with uncertain and trying times. Together, we have a sacred responsibility to rise up and address this adversity head on for the sake of our patients and communities. We have already seen that, through it all, HCA Healthcare colleagues continue to show an unwavering commitment to our mission and to each other.

We know that each member of the HCA Healthcare family has already made personal sacrifices for the betterment of others, both at work and in our communities. Because of you and our collective dedication, sacrifice and leadership, we will triumph over this challenge, stronger than ever.

As we continue to navigate the evolving demands of COVID-19, it is important to reflect on the extraordinary efforts taking place across the enterprise and within our communities.

We are HCA Healthcare and, above all else, we are committed to the care and improvement of human life.

“It never fails to amaze me how powerful a group of nurses can be when faced with a crisis,” says Robert Credeur, BSN, RN, NE-BC, CCRN, director of nursing at Mission Hospital in Asheville, N.C. Robert is one of several nurses that make up Mission Hospital’s COVID-19 Response Nursing team, a special, multi-disciplinary unit comprised of nurses from various departments including Medical-Surgical ICU and Pulmonary Progressive Care. “I have watched this extraordinary team of heroes quickly band together to give the gift of their knowledge, professionalism and sense of calm to our hospital and our community,” Robert says. Heather Fore, RN, is also part of the COVID-19 Response Nursing team. “It takes a village to raise a family,” Heather says. “I’m proud to say my nurses are my family and [we] are helping to take care of the village.”

Pictured below: Top row (left to right): Caitlyn Merrill, BSN, RN, Heather Fore, RN, Chase Shoptaw, BSN, RN, Allie Vella, BSN, RN, Melissa Porche, RN, ADN, PCCN, Amanda Jones, BSN, RN, Denice Morgan, BSN, RN, Allie Irwin, BSN, RN, Brice Butterfield, RN – Nurse Manager, PMPC/PMCU, John Marsh, RN – Nursing Supervisor, MSICU. Bottom row (left to right): Lacee Plemons, CNA, April Messer, RN, Laryssa LaPorte, BSN, RN, ONC, Bethany Dyer, RN – Nurse Manager, MSICU, Erin Whitaker, RN

Cover photo: Progressive Care Unit staff at HCA Houston Healthcare Mainland were led in prayer by assistant chief nursing officer Angel Romero, Jr., MSCIS, BSN, RN, as they prepared to receive their first COVID-19 positive patient. These colleagues worked tirelessly to equip themselves and the unit for the challenge before them and took this time to seek solace from above.

Pictured: Angel Romero, Jr., Sophy Mathews, Amanda Shipman, Laila Sulaiman, Nayarisha Turner, Sarah Schurke, Jaclyn Rodriguez, Carolyn Flutem
Over the past 20 years, HCA Healthcare’s supply chain has continually evolved to meet the needs of our caregivers and patients.

Our supply chain is a complex, multifunctional service committed to delivering value and results that improve the patient experience. It takes a lot of teamwork, organization and technology to keep the right supplies on hand and up to date—especially during times of adversity.

The Supply Chain team at Fairview Park Hospital in Dublin, Ga., have been hard at work supporting our facility teams with the resources they need to ensure their patients receive the best possible care. “We have started coming in on the weekends to count our PPE supplies,” says Pam Dalton, supply chain technician at Fairview Park Hospital. “I take great pride in doing this because we are the gatekeepers of these supplies. We all are working diligently to anticipate needs and keep our departments well stocked.”

Lynn Dennis, director of supply chain at Fairview Park Hospital, echoes this sentiment. “We are working diligently to conserve these precious supplies. Working with our HCA Healthcare supply chain network allows us to work strategically with all our hospitals to provide proper supplies needed for patients. We do this every day, but especially during this crisis,” she says.

Samantha Hackley (pictured right), a clinical resource director at Blake Medical Center in Bradenton, Fla., has also witnessed the impressive coordination of local and corporate supply chain teams. “I will say that I am 100% grateful to be working for HCA Healthcare and to be working as part of the West Florida Supply Chain team,” Samantha says. “The administration that I report to is truly amazing, inspirational and motivating. You can’t even imagine what is going on behind the scenes or how hard everyone is working to keep our staff safe. Even in this chaos, I wake up every day feeling blessed to have the team we do.”
The Environmental Services (EVS) team at Grand Strand Medical Center in Myrtle Beach, S.C., has been working in overdrive to ensure caregivers and patients are protected from COVID-19. For housekeeping supervisor Sharon Warner and her colleague Tracy Sherman, it’s much more than just working harder to keep ahead of the virus. “We don’t know, sooner or later, if our family members will come here and be in the hospital. We would want the same thing for them,” says Tracy.

Like many caregivers, Dr. Jaroslaw Parkolap, MD, medical director of emergency services at Westside Regional Medical Center in Plantation, Fla., has never faced anything like COVID-19. However, the experience—while difficult—has shown him a whole new meaning to the word teamwork. “We’ve always worked as a team here at Westside, but this has definitely brought us closer,” he says. “I’m very confident in the team that I have here. We’ve done a great job at handling strokes, heart attacks and other emergencies, so there is no reason why we wouldn’t be able to handle this crisis. We are aware that things may get worse and may push us even harder, but we will continue to wake up each day ready to give it our all.”

“I am so proud of our team and what we are accomplishing! We will continue to #raisethebar and deploy #excellencealways in caring for our community and staff. SO MUCH LOVE to our sisters and brothers in healthcare ... with the HCA CALVARY behind us—we CANNOT LOSE #aboveallelse”

- Krista Hawkinson (Facebook)
Our security teams have been working around the clock, monitoring security incident trends both within HCA Healthcare and across the nation, to keep our colleagues and hospitals safe.

“Our security team is increasing security checks at all entrances,” says Charles Butterfield, director of safety and security at Rapides Regional Medical Center in Alexandria, La. “We’re also stepping in as greeters and screeners.”

Throughout the enterprise, we’ve added more than 450 security personnel who, in addition to responding to typical security incidents, are helping with screening, enforcing visitor restrictions and ensuring visitors and patients wear protective masks.

At Cartersville Medical Center in Cartersville, Ga., colleagues have gone above and beyond to keep patients safe, healthy and emotionally supported.

“Our staff have been so resilient. We have implemented a no visitors policy to keep our community safe. With the policy implementation, emotional support for these patients has been of top concern,” says Jan Tidwell, Cartersville Medical Center’s chief nursing officer. “Due to this situation, nurses are literally the emotional support as well as bedside caregivers, taking on many additional tasks.”

Jan says all team members—including lab and respiratory staff who have been on the frontlines each day—have exceeded expectations when caring for patients and community members. “We have an engaged team, who have stepped up in phenomenal ways that have made us all proud.”

Pictured above:
Security officer Dayton Deville checks the temperature of Arthur Cleveland, an ECHO tech.

Pictured above:
Lisa Nichols, PCT, Heather Tutherow, HR Manager, Heather Brown, RN, Amanda Alva, RN
At MountainView Hospital in Las Vegas, Nev., colleagues have demonstrated what it means to care like family for their more than 150 volunteers. The team has committed to making “connection calls” each week until volunteers can return to their roles at the hospital. “Many of our volunteers rely on MountainView Hospital as much as we rely on them,” says Ana Vides, director of volunteer services. “For many, MountainView is their social support system, as well as a way to bring joy to their lives. We want to make sure that our volunteers, many who are elderly and live alone, are OK during this time of social distancing.”

Our Transfer Center teams are dedicated to ensuring patients receive the right care, in the right place and at the right time.

During this pandemic, transfer teams are serving vital roles in supporting and protecting our colleagues on the frontline. “In our pursuit of caring like family, we are here for one another, for our patients and for our frontline heroes,” says Brad Ewton, RN, a transfer center manager in our Mountain Division in Salt Lake City. “We strive to take the workload off of our hospital physicians and nurses in coordinating vital patient movement, so they can focus on caring for our patients and supporting their own teams.”

Pictured: Brad Ewton, RN
Mountain Division Transfer Center

Pictured above (left to right): Danielle Gustafson and Ana Vides
Our frontline pharmacists are working tirelessly with our physician, nursing and other healthcare colleagues to provide the best patient care and optimal medication therapy. “The literature and understanding of COVID-19 is changing daily, sometimes hourly. For the care and treatment of COVID-19 patients, it is imperative that our clinicians receive the best medication recommendations possible,” says HCA Healthcare’s AVP of clinical pharmacy and medication safety, L. Hayley Burgess, PharmD, MBA, BCPP, CPPS. “I am proud to be part of the HCA Healthcare family, working to provide real-time medication therapy alerts to our pharmacists directly into their workflow, to assure appropriate therapy and monitoring for all patients. Together, we are stronger.”

Pictured above: Marc DeRossett, VP of Finance at Parallon

Pictured below: L. Haley Burgess, PharmD, MBA, BCPP, CPPS
AVP of Clinical Pharmacy and Medication Safety

Having a plan to be resilient, no matter the circumstances, is key to supporting our patients, colleagues and physicians. The planning and preparation undertaken to ensure HCA Healthcare will be able to perform its critical business functions during any type of emergency event is called business continuity.

A shining example of this is the resiliency built around payroll processes to ensure our colleagues receive a paycheck on time each and every pay period. “We’ve built our payroll organization to be very resilient, allowing payroll to be processed from multiple sites across the enterprise,” says Marc DeRossett, VP of finance at Parallon. “Our payroll team is able to work remotely to ensure processes are completed in any event, whether it be a hurricane or pandemic. We are proud to serve and enable those who care for and improve human life in their communities.”

Pictured above: Marc DeRossett, VP of Finance at Parallon
As the COVID-19 pandemic moved across the nation, HCA Healthcare formed the Ambulatory Health Information Technology team with the goal of offering more patients access to care through virtual provider visits. The newly formed unit, which is comprised of approximately 100 individuals who work remotely and represent multiple departments, came together to quickly stand-up telemedicine sites in 23 states. In just over two weeks, more than 2,000 telemedicine consults were performed in physician practices, urgent care clinics and related care settings that previously did not offer the technology. “The ability to safely and effectively evaluate and diagnose our patients virtually through telemedicine technology has become a very important tool in assessing the increased number of patients who present to us with symptoms consistent with COVID-19,” says Peyman Omer, a medical assistant with HCA Healthcare’s Physician Services Group. “It’s reassuring to know that we have the support to continue to care for the needs of our community, all the while still keeping our staff safe as the pandemic evolves.”

Our Clinical Services Group (CSG) Data Science team is working with various teams at corporate and in our divisions to build and deploy new products that assist hospitals and staff with COVID-19 preparedness and response. These teams continue to collaborate on new and innovative ways to leverage HCA Healthcare’s vast dataset to help our hospitals and supply partners provide the best care for our patients, and to keep our colleagues safe. Examples of their impactful work include the development of the following four new products:

- **CoroNATE** – Provides a real-time visual overlay of hospitals and the impact of COVID-19
- **COVID-19 Summary Report** – Offers an overview of key measures and statistics related to the COVID-19 impact
- **COVID-19 Projections Dashboard** – Projects COVID-19 patient volumes based upon forming COVID-19 models
- **HCA Healthcare COVID-19 Map** – A U.S. map overlaid with HCA Healthcare hospitals, highlighting states with greater COVID-19 impact

Furthermore, we will continue to collaborate with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in sharing data to achieve the best possible outcome for all patients.

**Pictured to the left:** Dr. Steven Johnson and medical assistant Peyman Omer consult with a patient online through telemedicine technology.