

April 24, 2020

Dear All Faculty and Staff,

I am writing to you all at this time to thank you for your tireless commitment and dedication during the last few months of the COVID-19 pandemic. My words cannot fully express my gratitude and heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We have come together as a team that has embraced and directly addressed the pandemic putting our patients first at their most vulnerable moments. We have put our lives on the line with unwavering commitment to do what is essential to our profession. As a department, we have stepped up to every challenge presented to us in the O.R., ICU's, ER and many other locations around the hospital partnering with our new found colleagues. We have formed new teams and relationships that will position us for a "New Normal" on how we provide healthcare. We have become "trailblazers" on how to be safe and timely at a time of enormous stress and uncertainty. We have been flexible and nimble without hesitation to do what needed be done while simultaneously assuring our own safety and for those around us. We have rapidly created an intubation team, a central line team, an anesthesia consultation team, and ventilator service just to mention a few. We have fully committed to a daily WebEx to stay current and remain in touch to provide support and avoid extremes of social isolation.

During this pandemic, there are members of our team who have contracted COVID-19 and we have come together to support and pray for their speedy recovery. Everyone has a personal story and we mourn the loss of so many people around us or close to us and others. We have stories to help us stay strong and ready for the long journey ahead of all of us.

As your Chair, I am fully committed to do everything within my power and purview keeping us safe and strong in partnership with the RWJMS and RWJUH. Our leadership team has worked tirelessly to do what is best for all of you and our patients. We must continue to work together as we cannot do this alone. We must take care of each other so we have the strength and endurance moving forward. The journey is far from over, but I have no doubt we will continue to be pioneers finding solutions and new innovations that will make a sustainable difference. Tomorrow and beyond will look very different than our recent past, but we will be stronger and more unified than ever before.

Teamwork and placing the patient at the center of all we do will be the cornerstone of our success. Continuous assessing and reassessing how we organize and operate to deliver care will be the "New Normal". Each day we continue to transform how we provide care to our patients; with all of your support and insight I am confident we will be much stronger and healthier in the future.

I want to thank you for your dedication and your tireless work on behalf of our patients in the steadfast pursuit of excellence. I will remain fully committed to your safety and well-being. You are ALL HEROES!!

Respectfully Yours,

Keith P. Lewis, R.Ph., M.D.