

IN THE CROSSHAIRS OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

DR. MATTHEW LANGSTON

DIRECTOR OF PULMONARY CRITICAL CARE,
NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/JACOBI

Impact of COVID-19: My job is to represent our medical ICU team to ensure that we have the proper staffing and resources. That means making sure they're being heard and that day-to-day, on-the-ground ICU observations are being considered as changes are made.

Motivating Our Staff: As a department, we've done a really good job of coming together and supporting one another. I'm very fortunate that my peers in pulmonary critical care are all incredibly motivated. I check in with them through the week, and after some rough weeks, I just try to give them an open ear as they're processing difficult decisions and choices. If they're overwhelmed in the face of this, I think they appreciate that.

Why I'm on the Frontlines: In the weeks before coronavirus hit New York and we realized how this would impact us, my peer group and I had a very clear understanding that our unit would be in the crosshairs of the worst of this disease. There's a lot of unknown, but I also believe that this likely will be the moment of greatest need potentially in my whole career. If there was ever a time that we were needed to take care of our community, our peers, our friends and our neighbors, it's now.

Managing Stress: It's challenging. One of the hardest things, especially being in and out of meetings and involved in decision-making through the day, is that it's difficult to disconnect sometimes.

I'm very fortunate that I go home to my wife, Peggy Loo, and our dog, Hamilton - both of whom provide comfort and an open ear. My wife, more so, helps me decompress after some tough days.

I'm also very blessed that throughout my day - whether it's email or text message - family, friends from college, friends from medical school or my residency and former colleagues are just sending words of encouragement, with no expectation that I'm going to reply. They're just letting me know that I'm in their thoughts and prayers and on their minds. That's a big lift.

