

JUNE 1, 2020

## HEALTH CARE HEROES

### BEING PRESENT IN THE TOUGHEST TIME OF A PATIENT'S LIFE



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**My Role:** I have three roles: I'm Chief Resident, a physician on the frontlines, and I collaborate with other departments such as infectious diseases, pulmonary, critical care and anesthesiology to provide guidance for my fellow doctors who were under tremendous amount of stress from fighting COVID 19.

As Chief Resident, it's one thing to teach what we know, but it's another to teach what we're experiencing for the very first time. It was challenging guiding new physicians, but it helps having recently gone through the residency training program and knowing the system better.

In the clinic, we normally have 20 patients on ventilators, but during the surge we were seeing more than 130 people. It's tough experiencing that while having to develop solutions and treatment guidelines at the same time.

**Impact on Residents:** The fear of the unknown is something everyone is experiencing, especially for first year doctors and residents, on top of going the extra mile to pick up extra shifts. We've also lost colleagues to the virus. One was a physician assistant who helped train me while I was a resident. It's one of the many things that have touched me through this pandemic.

**Why I'm on the Frontlines:** There's a desire to help being a doctor who has taken the Hippocratic oath, but seeing people struggling to breath and losing their battle to COVID-19 adds to that. You see people who are in their last moments without family members because of visitation restrictions. One was a friend of mine from the Pakistani community who lost his life. There are multiple stories like that, so I am here for each patient.

Experiencing this definitely affects you. For some people, this is frustrating, but it motivates me to do better. This reinforced my idea of being a doctor who is present for people during the toughest time in their life. That's what kept me going, that's what keeps me going still and that's what brings me back every day.

**Managing stress:** The best people to go to for emotional needs to destress are my colleagues. They are my champs and motivators, and they listen when I vent. We were close before, and now this pandemic has absolutely strengthened our bond.

When I do go home, I do see my wife, my biggest champ, and my kids, but it's from afar. We're not hanging out like I would like to, but it's better than not seeing them at all. I still haven't been able to give them hugs since early March. I'm looking forward to that day. I can't wait.

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