



PeaceHealth
St. Joseph Medical Center

To our community:

My heart is filled with despair as I watch division and distrust spread through our community in the wake of the negative publicity that has centered around our hospital. As a MD and Chief of Staff at PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, I am seeing firsthand the extraordinary amount of work my colleagues are doing to prepare our hospital and clinics for COVID-19. And it's heart-wrenching to watch our collective achievements become overshadowed by the opinions of a single physician.

I want to share with you some vital information that has not been reported by the media.

I want you to know about:

- Our exceptional team of infectious disease specialists who are working around-the-clock to ensure that we are staying on the cutting-edge of COVID-19 testing and treatment;
- The doctors at Northwest Pathology, with the assistance of scientists from WWU, who have literally worked 20 out of 24 hours a day for days on end to increase our community's testing capacity;
- Our expert team of Emergency Department physicians who have developed strategies for streamlining care and preventing exposure of patients and healthcare workers to COVID-19;
- Our critical care specialists who are closely collaborating with our hospital administrators to make sure we have all necessary equipment and space to care for those who become critically ill;
- All of the physicians – hospitalists, anesthesiologists, internists, pediatricians, family medicine – along with our fantastic nursing and ancillary staff, who have come forth and agreed to work in our hospital medicine and intensive care units when the need arises;
- The team in our Childbirth Center who has implemented measures to keep pregnant women, newborns and families safe;
- Our Medical Staff Office professionals who have provided emergency credentialing to hundreds of physicians;
- The engineers and facilities team who have transformed the hospital's physical plant to accommodate the worst-case scenario;
- Our outpatient clinic staff who literally implemented telehealth capabilities overnight so that people can continue to receive care through our outpatient clinics without risking exposure by coming into a medical office;
- Our surgeons who willingly agreed to delay procedures that are clinically safe to delay;
- Our incredible Food & Nutrition and Environmental Services caregivers who keep us fed and keep the buildings clean and disinfected.

For many healthcare providers, the work we have done to prepare for COVID-19 will go down as one of the proudest moments of our careers.

There's no doubt that as a society we are in uncharted territory. The apprehension of uncertainty hangs heavy in the air, and we all sense it. But I can say, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that PeaceHealth and our greater medical community are prepared. We have risen to the occasion and formed a cohesive team ready as always to care for you and your loved ones.

Anna Dowling, MD, FACOG

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This letter is endorsed by the following local physicians and providers:

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