

March 30, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are Emergency Physicians at Cottage Health. We live and work in this community, so we are also your neighbors, friends, and the local doctors who may diagnose your child's ear infection at 3 a.m., or fix your broken wrist.

These are trying times and nowhere is the anxiety and stress felt more than in the Emergency Room. We are the frontlines of this fight. Every day we are seeing increasing numbers of sick patients with COVID-19. Some are walking and talking and go home safely to recover. Others are very ill and need to be admitted to the hospital for care, some in the intensive care unit. Every day we are seeing more and more of these cases.

We are inundated with news, updates, emails and social media posts regarding the virus. People are talking about the availability of tests, debating about how serious our situation will get. The reality is that COVID-19 is here. The virus is spreading. And the situation will likely get worse before it gets better.

This is not a political issue, not a liberal or conservative issue. This is a human issue. Regardless of your income or immigration status, every one of us is affected by this pandemic.

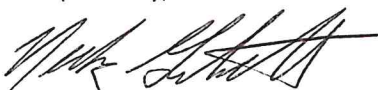
For the sake of our community, we implore each of you to do your part to heed the warnings of our public health physicians. Stay home, wash your hands often, sanitize the surfaces you touch, and practice social distancing. It is up to each and every one of us to do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19. If you are young, healthy and fearless, don't do it for you, do it for your mother or father or grandparent. They are the ones who will suffer and potentially die as the virus spreads.

If you are experiencing symptoms, assume that you have COVID-19. Isolate at home, rest, hydrate, and if necessary contact your physician by phone or use a virtual health app. If you have trouble breathing, chest pain, weakness or have significant co-existing medical conditions, come to the Emergency Room. If you are well and fearful that you may have been exposed – stay home and quarantine yourself. You aren't going to be tested. There aren't enough supplies to test everyone.

Although N95 masks and personal protective equipment are in limited supply, rest assured that the physicians and nurses of our community are committed to serving the needs of our patients. If supplies run out, we will find ways to keep going. We will still be here. We will continue to care. To us this is more than a job in our community, it is a duty we chose to care for and serve our friends, families and neighbors.

Together we will get through this crisis. It is times like these that bring out the best in us. Please make a phone call to check in with your family, friends and neighbors. Help those who need help. And we will look forward to the day when we can share a handshake or a hug again. Until then, let us all do our part to combat COVID-19.

Respectfully,



Nels Gerhardt, M.D.



Brett Wilson II, M.D.