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2020-03-16 A Message from Chancellor Roth

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HEALTH SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear colleagues,

This has been an unsettling time for us all, but I want to assure you that we as a health science center, a university, a state and a nation will rise to this challenge, as we have many times before. Here at the HSC, I am confident that we are fully prepared to meet whatever challenges might arise. The HSC Incident Management Team (IMT) has been meeting daily. As part of the President's leadership team, I have been helping to coordinate responses to this fluid and unpredictable situation. Our primary objective is to ensure the safety of our university community while continuing to provide quality care for our state's residents.

The Joint Health System Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been meeting for several weeks. Here is the latest information: there are 21 presumed positive COVID-19 cases in New Mexico. Some of these people are hospitalized and some are recovering at home. University Hospital has opened the Respiratory Care Center for walk-in testing. Both Lovelace and Presbyterian health systems are offering drive-up testing options. We are discussing plans to create an alternate site for health care workers returning from travel or with occupational contact of exposure.

We have suspended visitation at the University Psychiatric Center. Visitors to the Child Psychiatric Center are being screened prior to admittance.

Going forward, you'll be receiving daily messages from me summarizing latest events, along with communications from people in your direct line of supervision. Please take the time to review these messages so we all stay on the same page.

Beginning tomorrow, we at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center will be entering a new phase in our response to the COVID-19 novel coronavirus outbreak, in an effort to provide the maximum safety for our HSC family. [I distributed a message](#) earlier today identifying three tiers of non-clinical employees and what will be expected during the next three weeks. (This does not apply to clinical employees.)

Tier 1: Present at University, working.

Expectation is to work normal hours from your normal campus location or in coverage of critical customer service areas where Tier 3 employees have been removed from campus.

Tier 2: Not present at University, working remotely.

Expectation is to work normal hours from a remote location, such as from home but may be required to come to a physical UNM location for specific activities.

Due to the limited VPN and Citrix access, we are requesting that all users prioritize their use for clinical care. Both non-clinical and clinical work that requires VPN access will have to be requested through a [Help.HSC ticket](#). Please include a business purpose/need in the ticket **and submit by Thursday**. Please note, access will not be granted for “access to file shares.” Any and all files needed to work remotely should be downloaded to drives to take home. As a reminder, your first choice for accessing the EHR remotely should be Citrix.

Tier 3: Not present at University, not working, remain available to come to campus if needed.

Employees determined to provide functions nonessential during a state public health emergency will not be required to report to work, but will be paid at their normal rate and FTE. These employees must remain on standby and available to report to work if notified.

For employees who do have clinical roles, as best as you can, please remain home if you do not have any active patient care responsibilities. In all cases, your clinical supervisor will issue specific guidance. And – thank you. You routinely go above and beyond the call of duty in caring for your fellow New Mexicans, and now you are doing so under even more difficult circumstances than usual. I appreciate your profound commitment.

To protect yourselves and others, I’m urging everyone to maintain social distance in their personal lives and to stay at home as much as possible.

These measures will help to “[flatten the curve](#)” of new viral infections, exposing fewer of our vulnerable neighbors to risk, reducing the drain on precious health care resources and protecting our colleagues and friends working on the clinical frontlines.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone in the Health Sciences Center family for your patience and flexibility in the face of this rapidly evolving situation. You remain the reason that my job is such a joy, even in stressful times.

And finally, I would like to quote from a recent message from Dr. Oscar Bizzozero, chair of Cell Biology & Physiology, who has captured all of the HSC leadership’s sentiments:

- We are all in this together. Camaraderie, altruism and professionalism must prevail at all times. There is no room for selfishness.
- Be generous with your personnel. If possible, allow them to work from home. Show them your understanding and support.
- Provide your people with the appropriate resources to minimize the impact that this situation may be having on their lives.

- Be considerate with your students, staff and colleagues as they may be feeling a lot of anxiety.
- Follow the recommendations/guidelines that you receive from your superiors, even if you don't fully agree with them. Make sure that your personnel does the same.
- If you need to make decisions for which there are no guidelines, just use common sense. If unsure, consult with your peers or with me.
- Be flexible. The situation is fluid, so things may change quickly.
- Be patient. This situation will pass.
- Feel happy (and proud) that the whole UNM-HSC administration is working hard and devoting all possible resources to keep us safe.
- Be forgiving of my mistakes. I don't have all the answers (nobody does).

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul B. Roth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Paul B. Roth, MD, MS
Chancellor for Health Sciences
CEO, UNM Health System
Dean, UNM School of Medicine