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2020-03-24 A Message from Chancellor Roth

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

The numbers of reported COVID-19 cases continue to grow here in our state. The New Mexico Department of Health reports that 83 New Mexicans in 11 counties have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, and nearly 6,000 tests have been administered statewide. These numbers are changing daily. For the latest updates, please visit the [NM DOH website](#).

Sometimes there are events in our lives that force us to pause and take stock of who we are and how we behave. This is such a moment, at least for me. Now, I look around and ask myself, “Do I really need to use all those paper towels, or take that trip to the store? And if I do, do I really need that extra loaf of bread, ‘just in case’?”

I’m learning entirely new routines and different ways of setting priorities. How have I taken toilet paper for granted all these years? Talking to my kids and hugging my wife is suddenly more meaningful. Hoping that my colleagues and friends are doing OK is a daily concern.

When this coronavirus plague blows over – and it will – I am hoping that my use of scarce resources, much of my daily routine, and not taking for granted the big and little things in life stays with me.

Meanwhile, we would all do well to remember that life will go on. Here are a few positive reminders:

- BNGAP – Building the Next Generation of Academic Physicians – recently celebrated its 10th anniversary and held its second Pre-Faculty Career Development Conference. BNGAP seeks to create a pipeline for diverse trainees to serve as our academic

medicine workforce. Dr. Valerie Romero-Leggott, our Vice Chancellor for Diversity, is a member of the organization's board.

- Mary Patricia Couig, PhD, MPH, RN, associate professor in the College of Nursing, joined two other nursing experts in publishing a battle plan on the [American Journal of Nursing website](#) for nurses to take aggressive steps to protect patients, colleagues, and themselves from the coronavirus. These include implementing crisis staffing contingency plans, expanding the workforce as quickly as possible, and following stringent infection prevention protocols.
- Effective today the Clinical Employee COVID-19 Call Center is open. This single line will transfer each clinical employee to their home employee health service where they may obtain information about COVID-19 exposure, travel, symptoms, and returning to work. **The telephone number is 505-515-8212.** RNs will be fielding the calls from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Sunday. If the lines are busy, the employee may leave a message with a call back number and we will return calls as soon as possible. Again, this is for clinical employees only.

Finally, I just want to say that I think you all are doing a magnificent job in the face of great challenges. It speaks to your character and dedication, and it makes me proud to be part of such a wonderful organization.

Warm regards,



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