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### 2020-04-02 A Message from Chancellor Roth

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**HEALTH SCIENCES**  
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

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## A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

Yesterday evening, in an online discussion with health leaders sponsored by the Albuquerque Journal, I alluded to a “tsunami” of new COVID-19 cases that we see headed our way – and it is truly the case that the next few weeks will be critical here in New Mexico.

I’m proud to say that our state’s three major health systems – UNM Health, Presbyterian and Lovelace Health Systems – have come together in an unprecedented way to work with state health officials in preparing for this crisis. We are truly a “super health system” united to meet this urgent need.

The number of confirmed cases continues to grow – although more slowly than elsewhere in the country. As of yesterday afternoon, **363** New Mexicans have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, more than **14,000** tests have been administered statewide, and six patients have died. Visit the [New Mexico Department of Health website](#) for the latest updates.

The UNM Health Sciences Center has a three-part mission: to provide the highest quality patient care, educate the next generation of health care providers and conduct research to find cures. In that last area, our scientists

continue to shine. **Yi Yang, MD, PhD**, a research professor in the Department of Neurology, has received a \$2.6 million award from the National Institutes of Health for her study of sphingosine 1 phosphate signaling in cerebral small vessel disease.

And **Christophe G. Lambert, PhD**, associate professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, has been awarded \$776,000 for research into using health care databases to detect suicidality and improve treatment outcomes for patients with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

I also want to pass on thanks from **Carol M. Pierce**, director of Albuquerque's Family & Community Services Department, for the efforts of **Laura Parajon, MD, MPH**, executive director in our Office for Community Health, and BATCAVE education specialist **Luke Esquibel** in providing care for people at the city's Westside Emergency Housing Center medical clinic.

Finally, as I emphasized in last night's discussion, I hope each of you and your loved ones are taking the infection prevention guidelines seriously and adhering to the recommendations to stay at home, practice social distancing and wash your hands frequently.

If you must leave your home, I urge you to imagine that every person you meet and every surface that you touch is infected – and act accordingly.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul B. Roth".

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