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HEALTH SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

Many of us are now in the second month of working from home. We're learning interesting new phrases, like "Zoom bombing," and growing accustomed to attending virtual meetings while wearing sweatpants. When, we wonder, will things ever return to normal?

A timeline of when that could occur is starting to emerge. In her message to the University community yesterday, President Stokes announced that she is extending the period of limited campus operations to May 16. And while University leadership contemplates the possible ways the institution will be able to operate successfully across a range of potential eventualities and environments, the Health Sciences Center is actively considering the steps that will be needed to restore our clinical, academic and research operations.

For now, though, things remain status quo: only Tier 1 UNM personnel should report to work on campus, with all others should continue working remotely as they have been doing.

You might want to learn more about the work going on around COVID-19 at the HSC, so we're scheduling an online Chancellor Chat for next Tuesday, April 28, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. I'll be joined by a panel of experts from around the HSC to help address topics of interest. Please submit your questions or topics by close of business tomorrow at HSC-Communications@salud.unm.edu, and watch for the Zoom details later this week.

In sharing stories of inspiration and selflessness, I've naturally highlighted the commitment of our physicians, nurses and other health care professionals who are on the front lines of this crisis, putting their own well-being at risk to care for their patients.

Today, I want to tell you about the wonderful work being done by Health Sciences students who are volunteering their time because they want to be of service – and make a difference. Dr. Liz

Lawrence, chief wellness officer in the School of Medicine, shared a moving reflection written by third-year medical student Fran Chaves, who has been answering the phones at the COVID-19 hotline at the New Mexico Poison and Drug Information Center.

Fran tells of working an evening shift on Easter Sunday in which she reassures a new mother who's afraid of transmitting the virus to her infant through breast milk. But she also has the unpleasant duty of recommending that the mother remain apart from her baby until testing can assure that she isn't infected. On another call, Fran gets to share the good news with a family that all of their COVID test results have come back negative.

"Over the phone," she writes, "I get a snapshot of how individuals across our state are experiencing life in the pandemic, and while I play some part in their experience, they also play a part in mine. This sense of connection gives me meaning and purpose, pulling me out of the listlessness related to staying home 20 hours out of the day, many days of the week."

Fran expresses it well: those of us in the health care professions derive great meaning and purpose from caring for and interacting with our patients. I think it's worth remembering, especially in this time of crisis, how truly privileged we are to be doing this work.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul B. Roth".

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

Please visit the [New Mexico Department of Health website](#) for the latest COVID-19 updates.