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2020-05-04 A Message from Chancellor Roth

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HEALTH SCIENCES

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

I will be joined by HSC leaders for this week's online Chancellor Chat, scheduled for Thursday, May 7, from 12-1 p.m. Please submit your questions beforehand to HSC-Communications@salud.unm.edu, and watch for the Zoom details later this week. We will be focusing this session on wellness and how we continue to support our students, faculty and staff.

The new availability of antibody tests is giving rise to some specific questions about how they might be put to use in clinical and research settings. At UNMH it will only be for inpatient cases and not available to the general public.

UNM researchers are studying whether plasma donated by people who have recovered from COVID might enhance the survival prospects of severely ill patients. This is referred to as convalescent serology. The study might also include the use of the COVID antibody test to determine whether someone who had the symptoms truly had the infection.

I recently was asked whether people who donate blood ought to be tested prior to their donations – especially because it appears many people who have had the virus show minimal (or even no) symptoms. Nancy Joste, MD, professor and interim chair of the Department of Pathology, advises that local blood services “are not testing for COVID, as there is still no known transmission of COVID by blood transfusion.” She adds, “If a recovered COVID patient wants to donate convalescent plasma they will be given a COVID test.”

We are working through the process with main campus to determine who among our faculty, staff and students will return to campus – and when. It is likely to be a very deliberate process

that unfolds in stages, taking into account current social distancing recommendations and the physical configurations of our work spaces. I hope to have more information for you soon. I know this is a very hot topic and there is a lot of work being done to address a return to campus.

Meanwhile, I want to commend you for your continued patience and willingness to abide by these restrictions. I can assure you they are making a difference, as evidenced by the fact that New Mexico is among the states making the greatest progress in flattening the curve of new infections.

It speaks to our highly motivated and dedicated workforce.

As for the current COVID patient numbers, here they are for the hospitals as of 6 a.m. this morning. Right now about 50% of our ventilated patients are from the northwest portion of the state that we know has been hit hard by the virus.

Adults

# of Positive COVID Inpatients	55
# of Positive COVID Vents	29

Pediatric

# of Positive COVID Inpatients	1
# of Positive COVID Vents	1

SRMC

# of Positive COVID Inpatients	4
# of Positive COVID Vents	4

Thank you.

Warm regards,



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.