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2020-05-06 A Message from Chancellor Roth

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HEALTH SCIENCES

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

The tragic human toll taken by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of lives lost and lingering health effects for those who have survived the infection is substantial: more than 160 New Mexicans have already died. I will be focusing on wellness resources during my Chancellor Chat tomorrow at noon. Join us by logging on [using this link](#). We have corrected the previous audience limitation issues, so I look forward to seeing all of you.

Meanwhile, the true scale of the devastating economic impact resulting from the need to close businesses and maintain social distancing to stem the tide of new infections is increasingly coming into focus.

Government economists projected today that state revenues might decline by up to 30 percent due to lost tax revenue, particularly in the oil and gas sector.

We have seen similar impacts at the Health Sciences Center, where thousands of surgeries and other elective procedures were canceled or postponed to free up the hospital resources needed to care for COVID patients.

Yesterday, at a meeting of the Board of Regents HSC Committee, Ava Lovell, our Senior Executive Officer for Finance & Administration, reported that prior to the COVID outbreak we had been on track to generate a \$50 million to \$70 million net margin for FY 2020. This was due to major operational improvements and supply chain savings, coupled with positive Medicaid rate enhancements.

Unfortunately, the revenues lost in connection with the pandemic are expected to leave us with a net loss of close to \$25 million. As we move into FY 2021, we will be using uncommitted reserves to sustain our missions. My hope is that we will start to mitigate some of the damage as we move to ramp up our clinical operations in coming weeks.

While we do not have finalized plans for returning to campus we continue to work daily on how we will come back in person. I know this process of working at home or returning to work can cause extra stress and anxiety. Our wellness teams at the HSC and clinical entities have been doing amazing work and [you can access resources here](#).

On a more optimistic note, I'd like to call your attention to Christopher Medina, a member of our Combined BA/MD Degree Program who is graduating from the School of Medicine this month. A Las Cruces native, he is a first-generation college student who spent time studying neuronal transport in Dr. Elaine Bearer's laboratory.

Like the other members of the program, he is committed to practicing medicine in New Mexico when he completes his residency. You can read more about his devotion to serving the community at the [HSC Newsroom](#).

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

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