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Paul B. Roth

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

Our efforts over the past few weeks to resume surgeries and other patient services at our hospitals and clinics have posed new challenges and successes. We now have higher case volumes than we did prior to COVID-19. A large percentage of these are non-COVID related matters.

At the same time, the hospitals still have a significant number of COVID patients in house, so our overall patient census is very high. Meanwhile, there is considerable concern that we will see a surge in new cases as public health measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus are relaxed.

In fact, the virus is still causing illness and death. More than two million cases have been diagnosed in the U.S., and the pandemic has claimed nearly 113,000 American lives.

Psychologists define habituation as “the diminishing of a physiological or emotional response to a frequently repeated stimulus.” I believe some of us are becoming habituated to the threat posed by COVID-19.

Three months into the widespread shutdowns in response to the pandemic, and after digesting countless news stories about the novel coronavirus, we might no longer respond to the outbreak with the same degree of urgency we once did.

While we must accommodate to the reality of a world with COVID, now is clearly not the time to become complacent. If anything, we must become more vigilant, because the potential for a second wave of infection spreading through newly reopened businesses and offices is significant.

Were that to happen, the surge of patients would quickly return our health system to crisis mode – and no one wants to go through that again if we don't have to. So the need to wear masks, maintain social distance, practice hand-washing hygiene and avoid congregating in large groups continues.

I truly appreciate your continued patience and adherence to these measures. They are making a difference and helping to keep our patients and our community safe.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul B. Roth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and last name "Roth" clearly distinguishable.

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.