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Paul B. Roth

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

America's public health professionals have played an incredibly important role throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in shaping and implementing the measures necessary to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus and save lives.

They have set their routine responsibilities aside to step forward and work very long hours under stressful circumstances to promote new policies around testing, contact tracing, social distancing and mask-wearing in public that have aroused intense animosity in some quarters.

These are tried-and-true strategies for dealing with outbreaks of contagious disease, but some public health workers have unfortunately been paying a severe price for simply trying to do their jobs.

There have been disturbing reports from around the country of workers being subjected to threats and online harassment. Some have even been fired, while others are retiring early because they simply cannot put up with any more abuse.

All too often, conscientious public health professionals find themselves caught in the middle between elected officials and angry constituents – and wind up taking the blame for unpopular policies. This is never acceptable.

Here in New Mexico our public health workers have, for the most part, had the support and respect from the government leaders charged with managing this crisis and I believe this support helps explain why we have done a better job than many other states in containing the coronavirus.

Public health workers deserve our gratitude, and I particularly want to salute the graduates of our Master of Public Health program for their important contributions at this time.

As the University ramps up its operations, I urge you to read the regular updates from President Stokes and Provost Holloway. They will provide valuable guidance about what to expect in the coming weeks and months.

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.