The Human Side of Us: The COVID-19 Experience from My Inpatient View of the Pandemic Response

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The Human Side of Us

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Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of EMS:
COVID-19 Resources

https://www.ems.ohio.gov/
The Journey

**Original Plan:** One week of post-operative physical therapy at an inpatient rehabilitation facility followed by outpatient physical therapy

**Effect of COVID-19:** Lockdown with no visitation permitted less than 48 hours of arrival

Subsequent “stay at home” order temporarily closed home health agencies, including those that provided outpatient physical therapy

**COVID-19 OUTBREAK AT NEARBY NURSING HOME**

Mandatory 14-day quarantine (in the assigned patient room) for all new admissions

Mandatory use of face masks outside of room for all patients, twice daily temperature checks, designated wing for patients undergoing 14-day quarantine

**Day 41:** Discharge to home, sweet home!
The Human Side: Healthcare Staff

Fear of the unknown is a natural reaction and should not be suppressed or criticized.

Transparency, particularly in a dynamically changing scenario, is both informative and calming.

Security and safety of an employee’s family plays a key factor in healthcare worker resiliency.

- Adequate provision of support (e.g., meals, toilet paper, diapers, disinfectants) during off-duty hours is a critical element of workforce retention.
- Affordable or complimentary child care, elder care, and alternative housing.
- Flexibility in staffing to accommodate varying family structures and needs.
The Human Side: Patient

Fear of the unknown is a natural reaction and should not be suppressed or criticized

Security and safety of the patient’s family plays a key factor in resiliency and recovery

Patient isolation can lead to new, medical, behavioral and/or mental health conditions

Special needs populations (e.g. pediatric, geriatric, hospice patients) need additional support

Transparency, particularly in a dynamically changing scenario, is both informative and calming
Pearls of Wisdom

EMS and long-term care facility staff are members of the healthcare system.

All employees at healthcare facilities are vital members of the team.

Protection of manpower must be a top priority and inclusive of all members of the team including, but not limited to, personal protective equipment training.

A protected resilient healthcare workforce enhances patient care and safety.

Generation of policies must include the goals and needs of EMS.
## Challenges in the Future

**HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

- Preparing for surge with less resources
- Encompassing all healthcare providers in the response plans
- Economic decline resulting in closure or reduced capabilities of healthcare facilities
- Management of a larger uninsured patient population with reduced access to healthcare

**EMS**

- Equity with the other sectors within our healthcare system
- Education
- Recruitment and retention
- Mental health resiliency
- Adequate support and resources for rural and volunteer EMS sector
Innovation for the Near Future

Crisis standards of care plans on the local, regional, state, and national levels
Revise administrative and operational structure in advance of upcoming economic impacts
Prepare for a reduction in manpower and increased demand in resources
Plan for participation in mass vaccination campaigns
Expansion of telehealth and mobile integrated healthcare resources
Permit the utilization of telemedicine for compliance with EMTALA regulations for patients presenting to emergency departments