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Creating the Future of Ascension: An Important Message from Joseph R. Impicciche, President and CEO, Ascension

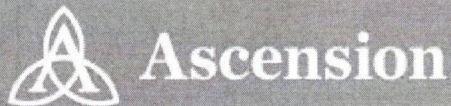
1 message

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Mon, May 4, 2020 at 10:22
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Hello, Everyone,

It's difficult to put into words what we have experienced the last few months — personally, professionally and as an integrated health ministry. But I'm going to try my best, because what we have witnessed and accomplished together is so significant that it deserves a moment of pause and appreciation.

Some of you may recall Sr. Maureen McGuire's story of our historic founders and how people would see their good works and ask, "How did they do that?" Our response to the coronavirus — something none of us has ever experienced before and I hope no one endures again — is part of Ascension's story and an unbroken link to the healing ministry of Jesus. We continue to shape a future during this challenging time, and I know that those who serve after us will reflect back and say, "Look at what they did."

I feel like our Mission of commitment to those who are poor and vulnerable has never been more alive than now, and it's through sharing our stories that we can help recognize the enormity of what we've done and continue to do together.

Gratitude

I've heard and have seen some of the amazing stories and media coverage about the unparalleled efforts of our caregivers and support services across Ascension over the last couple of months. I know that many of you have endured long hours and personal sacrifices during this time. Some of you are still processing all that

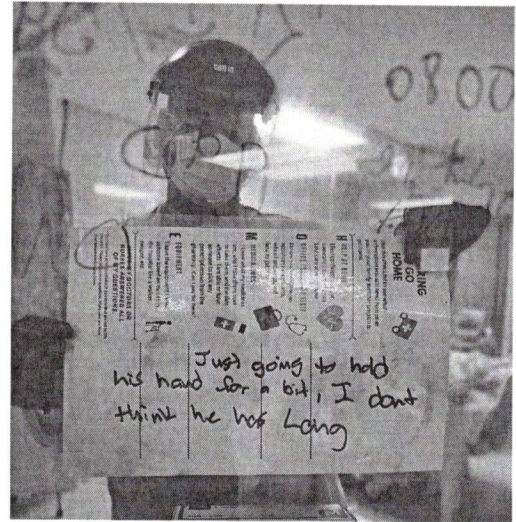


you've experienced. Certainly there is grief and anxiety when we consider all this virus has taken and the unknown of what more it will take before it's all over. But despite all that we've gone through, we have persevered, with remarkable strength and selflessness, drawing on a higher power — and each other — as we continue to give to those who need our help.

What inspires me most is the compassion and dedication to our Mission that runs through so many of the moments we've all witnessed in recent months.

A loved one thanked Ascension River District in Michigan because, as his brother passed due to the coronavirus, there were three nurses at his side who held his hand.

Or this photo from an ICU nurse at Ascension Seton, which says it all.



Nearly 100 Ascension caregivers from across the country volunteered to travel to some of our hardest hit Ministry Markets to help relieve co-workers on the front lines.

An MRI tech for Ascension Providence in metro Detroit created whiteboards to celebrate when COVID-19 patients were discharged.

At Ascension St. Vincent's East in Birmingham, a patient care assistant played tic-tac-toe with a quarantined patient through the glass door of their room.

Other markets call a "Code Sunshine" and play inspiring music and form cheering lines as COVID-19 patients are able to leave our sites of care healed and ready to go home.

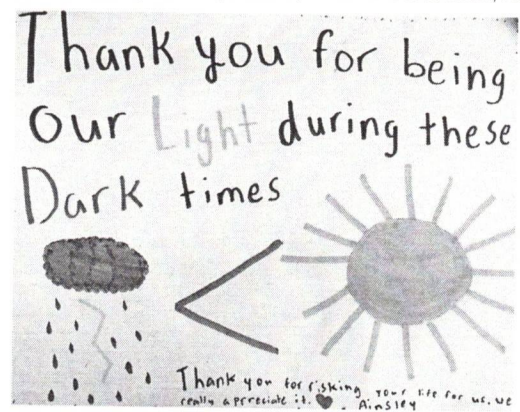
These are just a few stories of literally hundreds that have garnered local and national attention as a testament not only to our clinical competence and strength, but to the heart of our healing ministry. Our compassion, collaboration and grace under pressure are beyond anything I could have imagined, and yet I'm not at all surprised.

And I would be remiss if I didn't mention the community support. Through pictures, signs, messages and meals ... light vigils and prayers ... parades of cars and first responders, our communities have showered us with blessings and sincere expressions of gratitude and appreciation. Although this awful virus has left a trail of

challenges in its wake, it has also brought forth a renewed sense of solidarity, community and empathy.

Our Transformation Continues

As we flipped our calendars to January 2020, we were eager to spread our Mission-inspired Transformation initiatives from our Design Teams, having experienced success with pilots across our ministry. It was impossible to know just how important that body of work would be when we kicked off the first meeting in St. Louis in January 2019 and envisioned a transformed future with those who are poor and vulnerable at the center.

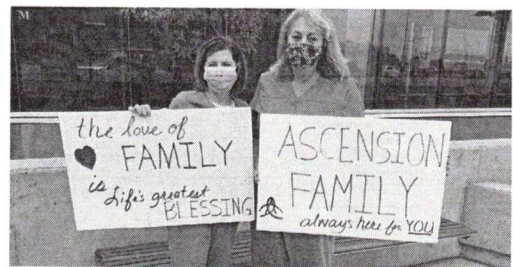


Because of our Mission-inspired Transformation, we went into our COVID-19 response already knowing how to engage collaboratively in sprints and use agile methodology to quickly test and cascade ideas; adapt to changing information and needs; and work in “teamlets.” In short, we have come together in unprecedented ways to develop an all-Ascension pandemic response – coordinating operational and clinical guidance through our COVID-19 Command Center approach – that was made possible by our Mission-inspired journey. And G Suite has been key to supporting real-time collaboration and faster workflows with many leaders and associates transitioning to working from home in a matter of 48 hours.

Thanks to the foresight and vision of our current and past leadership teams, our national health ministry was blessed with financial strength and a strong balance sheet as we faced the challenges of the pandemic. We were able to quickly pivot from our existing areas of focus to apply all our resources to the pandemic. We will recall all of these successes and lessons learned along the way as we continue our Mission-inspired journey.

Truly One Ascension

When we began our One Ascension journey five years ago, the purpose was to align and integrate our governance, operations, clinical care and brand identity across all of our care sites. We wanted consumers and patients to sense our connectedness both virtually and physically.

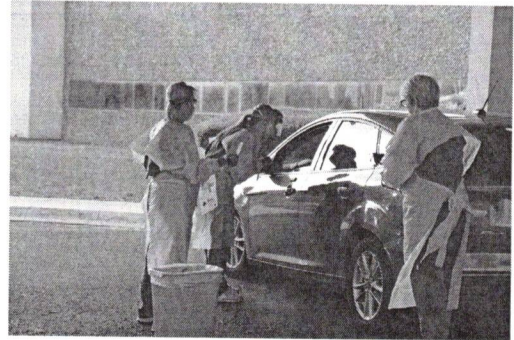


Over the past few years, we have seen the promise of One Ascension become a reality in the way we operate, provide care, advocate for the needs of those we are privileged to serve, share best practices, provide career opportunities, ensure access to care and engage in our communities.

In everything we do now, we do it as One Ascension. Never has that been more evident than during our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All the hard work of integrating our ministry over the past five years proved instrumental in enabling us to pivot over the course of days to combat the growing threat. Our One Ascension journey has taken a giant leap forward, demonstrating how our scale and scope enabled us to face challenges as a strong, unified ministry.

From applying clinical expertise as we developed guidance on testing and treating for COVID-19, to our COVID-19 Command Center approach that served as both “traffic control” and a “resource center” since the beginning of our response, the spirit of One Ascension has been on full display.



We’ve been able to effectively obtain necessary supplies due to The Resource Group and its purchasing strength as one of the largest provider-owned group purchasing organizations in the country. In fact, all of our subsidiary organizations and Ministry-wide Functions – from Medxcel to TouchPoint, Human Resources to Mission Integration and Marketing and Communications, and so many more – have enabled us to take a One Ascension approach to addressing our immediate and long-term needs for the benefit of our patients and the communities we are blessed to serve.

Associate Support During COVID-19

With input and guidance from cross-functional teams, and a sense of deep gratitude for our 165,000 associates, Ascension rolled out several programs specifically designed to ease the burden on associates in the midst of COVID-19. While our caregivers have been focused on caring for individuals in our communities, our leadership team has been working hard to support them and care for their physical, emotional, spiritual and financial needs during this pandemic.

Using our agile, teamlet approach, we were able to develop numerous benefits in a matter of days and weeks. We did all of this with one goal in mind: to help alleviate some of the anxiety and uncertainty of COVID-19 on our associates, knowing you continue to do the heroic work of caring for those we serve every day.

With practices and benefits like pay protection for all associates throughout the crisis, to extended dependent care, paying for necessary hotel stays, assistance funds to help pay for essentials such as rent and groceries for those facing particular hardship, we wanted you to realize that we are here for you and have your best interests at heart. If you have not done so yet, there is still time to [give to support your fellow associates](#) who have encountered financial hardship through the COVID-19 Associate Hardship Benefit Assistance Program.

Even as we begin to transition toward the future, personal renewal and spiritual first aid will be more important than ever. I encourage you to [explore resources](#) including prayers and reflections, on-demand spiritual care, wellness tools and leader rounding tool kits we’ve put together in one place for you.

Creating the Future

While continuing to care for people with COVID-19, we have begun to plan for how Ascension and our sites of care will look and operate as we come out of this crisis and enter a changed world. We need to adopt a new approach to delivering care because we know society will not go back to the “way things used to be.” There will be a “new normal” in healthcare, new expectations from our consumers, and a new outlook in all aspects of society. It is an opportunity for us to serve better, together.

As we transition from crisis response to a new future, we are extending our commitment to the underserved and applying all we have learned over the past couple of months as well as all we know about what our patients will expect from us in terms of safety and well-being.

A key focus of our renewal will be taking consumers on a journey from reassurance to returning to their sites of care. As we prepare to incrementally reopen our service offerings, we are well positioned with marketing and messaging that builds on the overwhelming goodwill for our caregivers and the Ascension name, provides reassurance to our communities, and supports our physicians, caregivers and support teams.

Our economic and operational recovery strategy is rooted in four phases:

1. **Resolve** – Our crisis-response efforts are focused primarily on rapidly defining and launching short-term actions to stabilize our health system by working closely with governments, peers and businesses to determine the scale, pace, and depth of action and response required in each of our markets.
2. **Recover** – We will quickly transition to develop action plans that will return our care sites to full effectiveness at scale. We have developed workstreams composed of several multidisciplinary teams focused on care delivery, capital investment, consumer and community engagement, associate well-being, and digital investments, among other things. The action plans developed by these groups will integrate with the government’s reopening phases, state plans and other economic recovery efforts. Throughout this work, we will focus on ensuring that we leave no one behind, that our solutions support the care of all individuals – including those who are vulnerable and need special attention now and in the future.
3. **Reimagine** – The aftermath of the pandemic will leave an altered healthcare landscape. We are focusing on changes needed across our health system, and across our nation, as a result of learnings from COVID-19, including how people’s behaviors will be impacted. We will be a voice continuing to advocate for access to care and policies that support the needs of the underserved.
4. **Thrive** – We will leverage what we have learned to reinvent ourselves and our portfolio of services and solutions so we can succeed as preferences and expectations of populations, employees and consumers change.

Based on consumer insights and behavior, we will welcome consumers and patients back to our sites of care by proactively instilling safety, security and reassurance for patients, providers, consumers and the community; building on goodwill to give lift to our Ascension brand reputation and endorsement of the Ascension caregiver; continuing to express our deep