

# Denial

Category: Contagion

written by Jessica Faraci | March 15, 2020

I first heard about COVID-19 in January. My husband, a fellow physician, read to me about it from a news article. On the third day in a row as he read aloud about the epidemic, I asked him to stop. It was hard to appreciate his daily updates when all I wanted to do was throw up due to the severe morning sickness I was experiencing in my first trimester of pregnancy. After all, it was just in China, right? Too far away to worry about.

At the end of January, the first U.S. case was announced. My husband resumed his daily updates, sharing some truly frightening statistics. Knowing it was getting real, I tried to listen but still found it hard, given my continued nausea. I asked him to stop. After all, it wasn't in our state yet, right? Life could go on as usual.

And then it came here. And then it spread. And now I am listening.

The last week of my life has felt surreal. A global pandemic was announced. Large gatherings were all canceled. We had difficulty buying toilet paper when we were actually low. And as of today, schools were closed statewide, leaving us to scramble for child care.

Is this really happening? How did I not see it coming? But then I think back to last month, and the month before, when I willfully and ignorantly tuned out the news and focused on my routine as usual. So I understand. I understand how some of my friends and neighbors are ignoring the social distancing recommendations and still going out to public events. I understand how people are crying "Fake news!" and trying to deny the facts. It is fear, an inability to face scary truths, that paralyzes our minds—and our governments.

I have now pushed aside my fears, and I am embracing the change that my husband encouraged me to make back in January. It will not be easy and it will not be fun, but it is necessary to save lives. And so I will return to work this week at my family medicine primary care office, and I will be the change that I previously feared. Our family is faced with the delicate balance of a dual physician household, day-care aged children, and a pregnancy to top it off, but we will push through with the support of our friends, our community, and a lot of love. Let's go save some lives.

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