

Wartime Efforts

Category: COVID-19

written by Anna Delamerced | April 8, 2020

I'm a rising fourth-year medical student and currently in limbo. Clinical rotations have suspended until further notice. But I want to help, even if only in small ways.

So I call older adults and residents of an assisted living facility, checking in and asking how they're doing. Are you getting enough food? Able to do some form of exercise: like walking? Do you need any assistance?

For the local YMCA website, I make dance-exercise videos for kids. And I read poetry out loud.

As part of a nationwide campaign, I also send emails requesting PPE donations from local clinics and organizations. In one morning alone, I sent a dozen emails. I've even been calling nail salons, asking if they have any masks, gloves, cleaning supplies, extra wipes, anything.

Sometimes I wonder: *What is my effort in the grand scheme of things? Am I making a difference in this fight against an unseen enemy?*

I see residents, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers getting bombarded, getting sick, even dying.

My mom fears for my dad, who works both in the clinic and in a hospital. She makes him change his clothes in the garage before entering the house. She Lysols his briefcase and sprays his shoes with disinfectant. A month ago, I would have thought that was overboard. Now, I'm thinking, what else can be done, should be done?

At the same time, I'm inspired. I'm inspired by people on the frontlines, the sweaty lines on their faces revealing how too few PPEs exist. I'm also grateful to those who are often so overlooked. The hospital's custodial staff. Those who stock the shelves at the grocery stores. Those who carry the mail. City sanitation workers who pick up our garbage.

Right now, a sense of uncertainty and sadness pervades our world, but I choose to believe that there is also hope. If anything, I'm more inspired to go into medicine than ever before. More resolved than ever that this is my calling. When it's my turn to step up onto the frontlines, I will take inspiration from what others are doing during this time of crisis.

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