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Leading Through COVID-19

FOR OUR CAREGIVING HEROES: *Supporting Clinicians During COVID-19*

Clinicians are at the frontline of treating novel coronavirus (COVID-19). They take an oath, yet for even the most altruistic, taking care of COVID-19 patients is a daunting notion.

And rightly so.

The head of the 150,000-member National Nurses United, Bonnie Castillo, said in a Washington Post article that “the shortage of protective equipment is the most critical issue for these workers.” She said “Nurses take risks every day because they’re willing to do that, they’re called to do that, and they want to do that. When you’re being sent out there with one of the most highly contagious viruses without your tools and weapons and without a coordinated plan, it’s frightening.”

And it’s not just the lack of protective gear. Experts say health care workers are getting sicker than others from COVID-19. Dr. Peter Hotez of Baylor College of Medicine in Houston shared,

“We know the high mortality in older people, but for reasons we don’t understand front-line health care workers are at great risk for serious illness despite their younger age...We have to do something to give front-line health care workers an extra level of comfort.”

Yes, we do.

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Clinicians have increasingly become an integral part of philanthropy strategies. Many philanthropy leaders have deep relationships with physician and nurse partners, who need our

support now more than ever. Here are four things you can do:

1 Say Thank You

Even if you're unable to meet with clinician partners right now, reaching out to say "thank you" and "we appreciate you" is never bothersome. In fact, authentic expressions of gratitude and caring may be just what they need to hear... and can go a long way.

2 Share Their Stories

Clinician caregivers have always been heroes, yet there has never been a time in our lifetime when caregivers on the frontline have been more heroic. Our organizations have the unique ability to capture these stories to share with many on the outside who are wondering what it's like in our hospitals and how clinicians are serving patients in this environment. Telling these stories will not only give donors a welcome break from the news but also will give our heroes the honor and recognition they deserve in a very personal way.

3 Raise Money in their Honor

Hospitals and health organizations need philanthropy now more than ever. Many states have halted elective surgeries—which cuts off a major revenue stream. There is exponential increased demand for supplies, equipment and medical personal. If you don't have a Coronavirus Emergency Fund, yet, start one. If you're worried about soliciting funds during this time of economic uncertainty, don't be. There has never been a better time for this country to rally around health care

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and our clinician heroes. Many donors are stepping forward on their own and need to know who can best leverage their charitable

investment. Donors give in honor of clinicians all the time through our caregiver recognition programs or other avenues, and that certainly won't stop now; in fact, it may increase if you give people the opportunity.

4 Allocate Funds for Clinician Support

There are many ways philanthropy can help support clinicians. Many hospitals are paying for childcare for clinicians to

ensure they can come to work. Clinicians are going to need physical and emotional support. Find out what the most pressing needs are and allocate funds to help bring those things to life. Yes, it is important to continue to fundraise and allocate funding to previously established priorities and projects, but these are unprecedented times. Work with hospital leaders to identify how philanthropy can help... and make it happen.

No clinician will ever call himself or herself a hero. They see this as their duty and their calling. Yet, no one wants to be in this situation. Fear of "bringing the virus home" and infecting loved ones, lack of supplies and lack of having protective gear are all concerns. Yet, these fears don't stop them from showing up, day after day, to care for patients. And it's our turn now, more than ever, to show up and support our heroes.

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