

A Letter to Our Community

Thursday, May 7, 2020

This week is both National Nurses Week and Hospital Week – two annual observations that we celebrate together at Anna Jaques in recognition of the role that every member of our team plays in caring for our community. In years past, this week served as a reminder to take time to thank our physicians and staff. We needed no reminder this year. Our pride and purpose have never been stronger.

The last eight weeks have reinforced the importance of our mission. We've been tested as an organization and as individuals but this crisis has also brought out the best in us, highlighting how our workforce is made up of people dedicated to a calling to care for others and to making a difference.

Nurses and Hospital Week will conclude on Friday with a fitting bookend: the 220th birthday of our founder and namesake Miss Anna Jaques. Born May 8, 1800, our hospital stands today because of one simple question Miss Anna Jaques posed to her family physician, Dr. F. A. Howe, in 1883: how can she best use her passion and resources to benefit the community?

Our community has asked that same question throughout this pandemic and answered in so many powerful, unique ways. Support of the Healthcare Heroes Fund has provided critical resources on the frontline. Donations of personal protective equipment (PPE) have kept our patients and staff safe. Handwritten letters and words of encouragement cover the walls of the hospital and lift our spirits. Gift card donations have provided direct support to our hardworking employees. This week alone community supporters and local businesses have provided meals, snacks and coffee, "The Thank You Movement" bus stopped by 25 Highland Avenue to give out healthy snacks, and we were treated to a special light show (before the rain came) – all efforts to support and thank our staff.

This support has fueled our efforts, boosted morale, and constantly reminds us that we are not alone in the fight against COVID-19. Though covered by masks, it has put smiles on our faces.

In mid-March, our entire workforce stopped business-as-usual to prepare for and respond to COVID-19. Nearly every way of life at Anna Jaques changed overnight, across every department to the way physicians care for their patients.

The end of April brought the expected patient surge to our hospital. Comparatively, Anna Jaques and our community have not been impacted to the same degree as others in part as a result of our community's extraordinary efforts to stay home, social distance and take necessary safety measures. Yet, there are still patients and families who have been devastated by the virus, as well as the providers who care for them. To date, Anna Jaques has tested 1,009 people resulting in 140 positive COVID-19 cases. 46 of those patients required an inpatient stay.

Fortunately, at Anna Jaques and across the Commonwealth, COVID-19 cases now appear to have plateaued, and with this comes hope that we will soon turn to the next chapter of this pandemic and begin to resume elective procedures and non-urgent care.

With guidance and framework provided by Beth Israel Lahey Health and in coordination with the state, this week Anna Jaques is launching our "Back to Business Plan" (or B2BP) which is expected to be a

staged and complex process. Our goals are to meet the full spectrum of patients' needs with a high level of quality, safety and reliability, support the well-being of our caregivers and other staff, return our full workforce and stabilize the organization.

We are preparing to resume elective care, recognizing that we will continue to care for COVID-19 patients, and to be ready for potential new surges in the future. The safety and protection of our patients, staff, physicians and community will be at the center of every decision we make.

We look forward to when we can safely rebuild and move forward with invaluable lessons learned.

In the meantime, we ask you to stay diligent on the protective measures that are keeping us safe. While we are all growing fatigued of the protocols, personal distancing, and infection control measures, these measures are keeping the virus to a manageable number in our community and helping us combat COVID-19.

Thank you for supporting us as we stand ready to care for you. We are in this together.