CELEBRATING
Nurses Week May 6–12
Hospital Week May 10–16

HEALTHCARE Heroes

The Herald
Hospital Support Staff

Janitors, technicians and food service staff are just a few examples of the people working behind the scenes of the coronavirus pandemic.

Hospitals around the nation are staying functional and open in part because of these frequently overlooked groups of people.

CLEANING STAFF
Dusting, sweeping, mopping and changing out bed sheets are all normal duties of hospital janitorial personnel. However, with the outbreak of COVID-19 in America, hospital maintenance and cleaning crews have had to step up their game.

An important part of their job is sanitizing every surface in every room the staff visits, and these workers are rising to the occasion.

Hospital housekeepers risk infection every time they walk into a patient's room, whether that patient shows symptoms of the virus or not. Keeping a hospital clean and functional is no easy task and these professionals are keeping up with admirable persistence.

MAINTENANCE WORKERS
The technicians who keep respirators and other essential equipment functional are also indispensable.

Machines that provide life-giving air to those suffering are in high demand, so the technicians who maintain them are of utmost importance.

The workers who specialize in other systems in hospitals are also doing their part to fight this illness. They keep the lights on, the water running, the heaters and air conditioners functioning at their optimal levels and the hospital grounds up to a high standard.

TECHNICIANS AND THERAPISTS
While COVID-19 is showing up everywhere in America, there are patients who are in the hospital for other reasons. Patients still need physical therapy, dialysis treatments, and other life-saving procedures.

Technicians and therapists continue to carry out and perform invaluable services for their patients while risking exposure to the disease. While it's true elective procedures are on hold at many hospitals, there are many patients who benefit greatly from therapy services.

The therapists and technicians who offer those treatments are still showing up every day and helping those who need it. Respiratory therapists are helping COVID patients with breathing problems, but they're not the only ones.

Therapists are also playing a key role in making patients strong and capable enough to safely leave the hospital, making more beds available when they might be needed the most.

FOOD SERVICE EMPLOYEES
Most hospitals across America have shut down their public cafeterias. Preventing the spread of the coronavirus this way is very important by keeping people from congregating in public eating areas.

However, hospital food services continue to feed and nourish patients under their care. Hospital patients need meals and do so with a smile. Keeping the spirits up of those who fight off COVID-19 is a rare gift.
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Hospital Support Staff
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Coronavirus Heroes
More than Docs
A Community Built on Care

Your commitment to serve others in their greatest time of need inspires us every day. Thank you for being there for all of us with unwavering strength and courage.

You truly are our Community Built on Care.

Valley Baptist Medical Center
BROWNSVILLE

A COMMUNITY BUILT ON CARE

ValleyBaptist.net
Connect with us on Facebook: @valleybaptistmedicalcenter

* Please note that some of these photographs were taken prior to social distancing mandate.
Jerry, RN, Brianna, RN, Iris, RN, Cristal, RN, Julian, RT

sisters Claudia, RN and Cristal, RN

Cristal Rodriguez, RN

Alexis, RN, Iris, RN and Cristal, RN
Robert Vergott, Daniel Rivera, Andrew Douglas, Maria Ortega, Laura Castillo, Joanna Kanuga, Andres Reyna, Mike de Leon, Mario Varela, Justin Gonzalez, Maria Dobbs, Tuyen Huynh

Elizabeth M. Torres, RN VBMC Bro.

Dr. Jose Natividad Perez Enriquez and Staff Mercy Clinics MD PA

Emmanuel Garces, PA VB
Now, however, they are working tirelessly to protect citizens who are susceptible to the COVID-19 virus while working under, in some cases, unthinkable conditions.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

Doctors are working under extreme pressure and high risk to save the lives of citizens who are defenseless to the coronavirus. At the same time, many hospitals are short on personal protective equipment — including gloves, masks and gowns — due to high demand during the global outbreak. This means the staff who need to treat patients are more at risk of catching COVID-19 themselves.

Luckily, some people who are sheltered at home and have plenty of time on their hands have found ways to be helpful. By doing a simple Google search, anyone can find the best methods and materials for making basic face masks that are almost as efficient as the factory-made ones.

Coffee or vacuum filters offer more protection than scarves, according to a New York Times article. If the fabric is dense enough to not let light pass through it easily, it is dense enough to help slow the transmission of viruses.

People have begun to craft these masks, and many donate what they make to their local hospitals for the doctors and nurses to use while treating and testing patients with symptoms of the coronavirus. Others may donate the masks to people who need the extra protection, including elderly neighbors.

If you’re interested in donating masks or supplies to your local hospital, make sure to check with the hospital and find out what they need first.

**ACCURATE INFORMATION**

Another role medical professionals are playing is delivering accurate health information at a time when it is in high demand.

The spread of information online — not all of which is accurate — has created a need for trained medical experts to help journalists and the general public separate fact from fiction.

Many doctors and nurses have stepped up to help individuals and public policy makers decide on the best course of action. Without their science-based input, the pandemic could have been much more deadly.

**THEY NEED SUPPORT**

During this time while health care needs in the midst of this pandemic are immense, doctors and nurses need help from the public.

One, we should heed their advice. As more information about the reality of the coronavirus’s impact becomes available, Americans should trust doctors and follow their recommendations — whether that is things we can do as a society or what we should do as individuals who may be sick and worried.

Supporting medical professionals may be even more critical, though, in the aftermath of this pandemic. In many cases, they are dealing with a lack of proper equipment and an overwhelmed medical system, both of which could be improved with proper planning and quick response for future disease outbreaks.

Right now, the best way people can help is by staying healthy. Making homemade masks is fine, but it is much better if those masks aren’t needed in the first place.

Following the recommendations of public health authorities — recommendations that are likely to change over time — is the best way to support the doctors and nurses who are fighting on the front lines of a war on the coronavirus.

The choice to order groceries instead of going out and buying them in person when you have a cough could help slow this pandemic and let our doctors and nurses breathe.

And going forward, they deserve the public’s support to make the nation’s entire health care system better equipped and prepared.
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Linda Paniagua, MD valley baptist medical ed physician

Salvador Vazquez, LVN

VBMC WOMENS CENTER DEPTARTMENT COLLAGE

Karla Mora, Paramedic

Maggie Martinez, Renal Care Acutes LVN Floater
Valley Baptist Medical Center

HEALTHCARE Heroes

May 2020

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ICU

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Emergency Medical Technicians

While people working inside hospitals are clearly playing a heroic role, the first interaction many people have with the health care system happens in their own homes and offices.

Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are in the middle of it all, out in the community as a first line of defense against a potentially deadly virus.

**CHANGING JOB**

According to reports in the New York Times, first responders in New York City are playing different roles than their usual routine.

Always a high-stress job with life-or-death consequences and tremendous time pressure, New York’s EMTs took on the added task of screening who should and shouldn’t go to the hospital during the coronavirus pandemic.

Some callers even fake symptoms or exaggerate their conditions, in hopes of getting better care, the newspaper reported.

EMTs now have the uncomfortable role of telling some patients they shouldn’t go to the hospital.

**RISKY CONDITIONS**

While hospitals are known for having sterile, somewhat controlled environments for treating medical conditions, EMTs have to work in the real world.

That means they’re dealing with unknown variables.

In addition to working through all kinds of weather and fighting traffic to quickly get to patients, they have to be prepared for the possibility that every person they interact with could potentially be carrying the COVID-19 virus.

They are also dealing with the same supply shortages as hospitals. Personal protective equipment is in high demand all around the globe, and EMTs are forced to make the best of a less-than-ideal situation in many cases.

**HAZARD PAY?**

United States Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has suggested that coronavirus first-responders deserve hazard pay because of the extraordinary conditions they are working through during the pandemic.

According to EMS1.com, which covers the emergency medical industry, the idea gets a mixed reaction among medical employees.

“Many say the pay isn’t necessary, arguing, ‘we knew what we signed up for when we climbed onto the rig,’ while others note the extraordinary circumstances, contending, ‘while the job of paramedics and first responders has its inherent risks, the COVID-19 pandemic is outside the scope of everyday risks,’” an editor’s note reads.

**DISPATCHERS**

While they are not physically on the front lines fighting the coronavirus, the dispatchers who take emergency calls and communicate with first responders are no less impacted during the pandemic.

Calls for emergency services are reaching record levels in many areas. The same calls for regular emergencies continue to come in from car wrecks, heart attacks and other health problems, and the coronavirus only compounds an already stressful job.

The safety of first responders also rests on how well dispatchers communicate. They have to gauge whether a patient has coronavirus symptoms so EMTs can arrive with the right protective equipment. Not only that, but they have to relay accurate information about addresses and other details that can save lives when time is at a premium.
Joann Slois, CNA

Perla Ramirez RN

Jaime Cortez RN, Mayra Arambul RN, Lisa Jones RN, Andrea Hixon RN, Joann Solis CNA

Irene Alvarez, CNA Xotchil Respетory
Among those who are doing their part to keep the economy and Americans afloat are grocers, delivery people, pharmacists and long haul truck drivers. Not only do individuals need these people, but the economy does, too.

**GROCERS**
Grocery stores have seen unprecedented floods of people coming in to buy essential items to tide them over during mandatory stay-at-home orders or true quarantine.
They also deal with attempted hoarders who try to buy more than their fair share of items in high demand.
Many grocery retailers have decided to close earlier to help keep shelves stocked for the next day’s influx of purchasers.
Checkers, stockers, custodians and managerial staff have to face a nervous clientele each and every day and still manage to do so with a positive attitude.
Grocery workers’ dedication to keeping their shelves stocked and customers safe makes them heroes of the coronavirus pandemic.

**DELIVERY PEOPLE**
UberEats, DoorDash, Favor, and grocery-store specific deliverers are just a few examples of the workers who are supplying needed items to the home-bound.
Special care is being utilized by many of these services to keep goods contaminant-free. They’re also playing a key role in keeping small businesses afloat, including many restaurants that are only offering delivery and takeout services.
Many people who can eat at home are ordering in to help keep their favorite restaurants in business during this extremely unusual time when dining rooms are closed and the option to eat out is impossible.

Many of us have that favorite restaurant where the ambiance is perfect, the wait staff is wonderful, and we make some of our happiest memories. Delivery people allow consumers to help out in the only way they can to keep those businesses operational during this difficult time.

**TRUCK DRIVERS**
Toilet paper, medical supplies, groceries and pet supplies are just a few of the items that are brought to Americans by truck drivers.
There are so many things long-haul and local drivers deliver that are necessary during this pandemic. Truck drivers are making things happen, one drive at a time.
People on social media are recognizing how vital this industry is. There’s even been a call for a national long-haul truck driver holiday on Oct. 4, which references the famous radio call “10-4, good buddy.”
We owe much to these men and women who keep our grocery stores shelves stocked and our medical personnel supplied with their protective gear.

**PHARMACISTS**
Where would we be if pharmacies shut down? Nowhere good.
Maintaining the availability of necessary medicines Americans need is one of the most important jobs during a pandemic.
Pharmacies and their staff are supplying people with their medications throughout this outbreak and deserve much praise.
Pharmacists are also helping to advise those who are suffering with symptoms to know how best to stay safe at home and when to call their physician or go to the emergency department.
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Thank you, nurses.

WellMed extends a heartfelt thank you to all nurses during National Nurses Week (May 6–12)

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