

Dear Friend,

I am writing to reassure you and everyone in the communities we serve that our entire organization is hard at work fighting the Coronavirus pandemic. We are adapting daily to its ever-changing and increasing demands. One thing is clear. Never has our skilled and compassionate end-of-life care, bereavement care, and supportive care been more needed and essential.

Even at this early stage of the crisis, the number of hospice patients we are caring for is already greater than at any time in our more than forty-year history - more than 525 each day. Our challenge - and our commitment in the challenging and uncertain weeks and months ahead- is to walk side by side with our patients and their families on their journey with illness and loss, no matter whether their journey is associated with COVID-19 or any other life-limiting condition.

In case you're wondering:

YES, we are an "essential organization." We are implementing the most up-to-date recommendations for screening procedures and the delivery of care from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

YES, we have been conducting rolling training of the appropriate and personalized use of masks and other PPE (personalized protective equipment), as supplies become available. We have the special staff know-how and facilities to care for patients who must remain quarantined.

And YES, we have staff with grief and loss counseling skills that are especially suited to coping with the traumatic loss of a loved one and the loss of certainty, stability and normalcy during this pandemic.

We are appropriately recognizing and managing any risk and are prepared to deal with any exposure. Our team of professionals are experts at living with uncertainty and risk. I'd be less than honest, however, if I didn't admit that this is a very tough time, especially for our front-line clinical staff.

All of the challenges you've heard about in the media related to limited tests and supplies are challenges that our doctors and care team members are dealing with on a daily basis. What's more, while our social workers, chaplains, counselors, administrative staff and volunteers can continue their work remotely utilizing technology, our direct clinical care team members cannot.

They must take extra precautions to protect themselves and everyone they encounter, including their own families. As courageous and compassionate as our front-line teams are and will no doubt continue to be, they are working under unusual and often stressful circumstances with no end in sight.

I was thinking of what people like you can do to help, and I have an unusual request. Our organization obviously has lots of unforeseen and mounting expenses due to this crisis, and gifts of any amount are much needed and would, for example, help us implement new telehealth technology including equipment, training and services. It has become very obvious that telehealth will be an increasingly important part of our future. But, as the crisis deepens, I am just as concerned about team morale.



Would you be willing to help lift the spirits of our direct care team members by writing some words of appreciation and encouragement?

You may not think your words would matter, but they will. Over the years, I've never ceased to be amazed how quickly tears come to the eyes of our most experienced staff when they are thanked by a patient or family members. During this crisis, kind words can be so much more. They can be a life ring.

Thank you. Please join us in doing everything possible to protect yourself, your loved ones, and our community. And please know that, if you need us, we are here.

Sincerely,

Ben Marcantonio
President & CEO

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**Note of appreciation to Hospice of the Chesapeake's
doctors, nurses and direct care team members**



A large rectangular area with a light blue border and horizontal lines, intended for writing a note of appreciation.

Please mail your note of encouragement
and appreciation to:
Hospice of the Chesapeake Foundation
John & Cathy Belcher Campus
90 Ritchie Hwy
Pasadena, MD 21122

OR email your message of appreciation to:
nlapier@hospicechesapeake.org