

Dear Pioneers Community,

As we continue to see significant rises in COVID-19 illness and hospitalizations, we are grateful that this year's COVID hospitalizations are much less than last year's, so far.

However, this year poses new challenges as the surges of patients fluctuate quickly in California and across the country. I have heard directly from leaders I know in Chicago, Dallas, and Oregon that they too are facing overwhelming numbers of patients, both COVID and non-COVID with 20% fewer staff. Many healthcare workers are out with a COVID positive diagnosis. Others have retired or left to help others crisis surge areas across the country.

As communities and patients become better informed regarding the possible symptoms of COVID, the volume of COVID patients has grown significantly. Once again, we are seeing chronic shortages of lab testing supplies. We are adjusting the priorities for testing due to the increasing scarcity of testing supplies. This has resulted in long lines of patients simply to be tested. In San Diego, there have even been traffic blockages due to the line of those awaiting testing.

Again, throughout the country, including San Diego County, as hospital and clinic staff face overwhelming numbers of patients seeking care and shortage of staff, there are significant numbers of patients that are waiting in the Emergency Room for space to be admitted (23 in our emergency room today).

We say all of this to make you aware and prepared as you encounter delays in care and stressed patients, families, and healthcare staff. I'm happy to say that the Pioneers team of caregivers are working at their highest and best capacity as they face this most difficult of times... Better prepared than last year, but still facing an overwhelming number of patients with fewer available employed staff.

Please remember them in your prayers and when you see them at work, or at home. They are working diligently to care for you and your friends. They are as they have always been, the best of people and professionals. Let's be kind to, and understanding of, one another.

Sincerely,

Larry Lewis

CEO, Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District