



DR. WASSIM SAAD
CHIEF OF STAFF

CHIEF PROGRESS REPORT

December 2020 Edition

“Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today”.

- Thích Nhất Hạnh

We are at the beginning of wave 2 of the COVID-19 pandemic and with the rising case counts, the looming lockdown locally, the recent outbreaks in our hospital and in other institutions as well as the burnout and fatigue being experienced by everyone, it would be easy to lose hope.

COVID-19 has proven to be a highly transmissible virus and asymptomatic transmission makes the virus even more difficult to contain. Researchers have developed a variety of models to predict the course of the pandemic and none of these models anticipate a rapid end to the pandemic. What makes things even worse is that different models using different assumptions and run on data from different jurisdictions all suggested the likelihood of a second (which we are in now) and possibly subsequent waves of illness.

So how do we maintain hope when we are in for a very difficult and brutal few weeks as well as a likely terrible start to 2021. How about starting with some perspective. If you were born in 1900, by the time you are 14, World War I begins and will end by the time you are 18 after 22 million people die. Before that war even ends, the Influenza pandemic of 1918 will spread across the globe killing 50 million people, mostly the young and healthy within a matter of hours/days of infection. When you are 29, you will witness a great depression and global economic crisis that increases inflation, unemployment and famine. Then at the age of 39, World War II begins and ends when you are 45 after 60 million people die. You will then experience at least 2 more wars before you are 75 including the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Yes, it seems like 2020 is terrible and it is, but we are living through a global pandemic where all we have to do is wear a mask and physically distance while we live at home with food, electricity, running water and wifi. None of these amenities were available in 1918 during the first global pandemic of the century and yet humanity survived.

For us as health care workers, we can't stay at home and we want to come into work to do what we can to help patients and ensure we survive this pandemic. We are going to be tested over the next several weeks and I know we will pass with flying colours. We have been a beacon of hope to the community and to everyone outside the hospital and we must continue to spread hope to each other and be kind and understanding even when we are exhausted and feel like we can't do any more. We know how to keep the virus from infecting our bodies, but we must resist the virus affecting our minds, our hearts and our hopes.

We are absolutely going to win this war; of that I have no doubt. The primary hope for curtailing the virus is the development of a vaccine which as we all know is on the horizon. Ontario is set to receive it's first doses in January and from there mass vaccination programs will roll it out and we will hopefully start to see the beginning of the end. Reinforcements are on the way; we must hold the fort a little longer and we must believe that tomorrow will be better.

What else can be said about this pandemic that hasn't already been said? I know I have run out of sports and war analogies! All I can really say at this time is thank you. Thank you for having the strength to keep going, thank you for your professionalism and commitment to patient care and thank you for not losing hope.

Until next month,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wassim', written in a cursive style.

Wassim