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5.28.20 Coronavirus and Re-Entry Update

To my patients:

We passed a sad mark yesterday of 100,000 lives lost due to the coronavirus. The tragedies of this virus extend even beyond that, with morbidities suffered by those who survived the virus but have lasting kidney, neurological and lung injury, and the economic impact on the many that are out of work.

As our state opens up more, I want to remind you that many things have not changed: we do not have a vaccine, we do not have a cure and we are still ironing out how to manage those critically ill in the hospital, as we have a nearly 40% mortality for those in the ICU. The goal now is to manage spread of the virus by doing mass swab testing to find people who are asymptomatic or symptomatic with active COVID-19 infection and tracing their contacts.

Testing issues

I currently only get 5 swabs at a time when ordered, which needs to cover patients who are symptomatic and need testing, as well as patients who need to be tested prior to elective surgery. Please [click here](#) for information on testing in LA county. As many of you know who have already accessed this testing, it is safe, efficient and easy to arrange an appointment.

I still cannot recommend antibody testing at this time because it is not reliable and depends on the prevalence rate in our population. We can't hang our hat on the results and guide you in any way with it. I don't want to give you false reassurance that you are safe because the test results could show a false positive. For more information, see the [CDC Interim Guidelines for Antibody Testing](#).

Staying safe

The main way COVID-19 is spread is through respiratory droplets. I encourage you to keep yourself safe by using a mask, washing your hands thoroughly, avoid touching your face and staying six feet away from others as much as possible.

Social distancing is still advised which is psychologically very hard---we are social animals. But I caution that even as fatigue sets in, don't get too lax. New models for harm reduction are being explored as professionals recognize that isolation and stress from social distancing is taking its own toll. We know that being outdoors is better, but certain activities are safer than others.

For instance, a cookout where people are touching the same utensils and eating is higher risk than walking with a friend while keeping socially distant. Please be responsible to avoid surges in cases as we saw last week. I don't want any of you to fall ill.

Staying sane

How to stay mentally sane during this time? Here are some simple tips I can share with you:

1. Stop thinking of the losses—like the travel plans ruined, indefinite feeling of isolation—and focus on yourself and your home.
2. Keep to a normal routine and create a new quarantine ritual like an exercise program, journaling, painting, and reading time.
3. Avoid watching too much coronavirus coverage on the news.
4. Seek help if you are feeling sad or anxious.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica O Sarang MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monica Sarang, MD