

Onward Together

Agile. Resilient. Connected. Balanced.

Staying informed and centered in the time of COVID-19



Week 1 | March 21, 2020

In this issue

- Team Shout Outs 2
- Updates & Progress from the Front Line. 3
- Tips to Thrive, Not Just Survive at Home—Alone or with Kids 4
- Work Effectively While Sheltering in Place 4
- Safe Habits at Work 5
- News from the System and Hospital Levels. 6

Calendar

Come join us:

Start and end the day with 15 minutes of **Breathing and Meditation with Bala Subramaniam, MD, MPH** by Zoom 6:40 am, 4:25pm

Coming soon: **Zoom Yoga with PACU Nurse, Jackie Everett** two evenings per week.

Coming soon: **Virtual Zoom Happy Hour** hosted by **Scott Zimmer, MD** at the tap. All department members welcome to join in and share moments of reflection, levity and just plain old fashioned water cooler talk.

Town Hall with Dr. Talmor: 5pm Monday, 7am Wednesday, 5pm Friday

Fundraising for medical supplies: Dr. Yan Wu with the help of Jing Ma and her church is actively procuring supplies from China and elsewhere. Donate by PayPal at BMWBC's account at jjgwang@gmail.com (see inside)

“Laughing together is as close as you can get without touching,”
-Gina Barreca

A word from the Chief

Danny Talmor, MD, MPH

Friends,

Welcome to our new weekly newsletter. As our COVID related activities escalate, we all need to be in more frequent contact with each other and I hope you find this newsletter useful. We want to hear your feedback and welcome your contributions.

I have to start by saying that I have never been prouder of our department. Each and every one of you has stepped forward to prepare ourselves to provide the safest care possible for all our patients. It is at times like these that the quality of our staff shines through, the skill, the dedication, and the flexibility to adjust to rapidly evolving circumstances with a spirit of cooperation and commitment. The entire network has been impressed with the expertise and innovation of our clinical staff in planning for the COVID-19 pandemic and I have no doubt that patients we care for who are afflicted with illness will be in good hands and benefit from your meticulous preparation and planning. I want to thank our support staff as well for rising to the occasion and shifting quickly to a virtual work mode that will benefit everyone's safety.

While I cannot predict the future, I can promise you that we will prepare for the worst and hope for the best. While this is a challenging time, I feel enormous pride and respect for my colleagues and staff and have confidence that together we will prevail. At the risk of sounding over the top, I will plagiarize Winston Churchill- Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the Department lasts for a thousand years, men will still say, **This was their finest hour.**

Thank you all very much.

Danny

COVID-19 Resources:
Go to **Anesthesia Intranet** and the **BIDMC Portal:** COVID-19 Central

Official Boston coronavirus status:
<https://www.boston.gov/news/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-boston>



“Mount Auburn has expressed their happiness and gratitude for the Anesthesia Department’s efforts to keep them safe.” -Mike Haering

“Haobo Ma, Lior Levy and Erin Burns did an exceptional job running Sim Training in Milton.” -Krish Ramachandran

“The Community has felt the love, care and respect from Danny’s town halls.” -Riki Kveraga

“Our CRNAs are the best in the Nation. We have the most amazing CRNAs with the best attitudes—always eager to help out. Their enthusiasm and commitment is incredible and we really appreciate their contribution to the effort and seamless partnership with our attendings.” -Danny Talmor

“A shout out to Dan Walsh and the ICU and Anesthesia staff of BID-Plymouth for the outstanding planning and training for the COVID surge. This includes teaching the staff in the specific treatment of severe ARDS, and planning and staffing for areas in the hospital which ordinarily do not take care of intensive care patients.” -Alan Lisbon

“Shout out to Joanne Grzybinski and Vanessa Wong, both here at 8:45pm on a Friday! Their devotion nothing short of incredible.” -Meghan Krajewski

“Dan Walsh has been in Plymouth

working hard with local leadership, ICU staff and others to prepare Plymouth Hospital for the arrival of critically ill COVID-19 patients. Similarly, Jess Cassavaugh and Haobo Ma are working hard and developing the same protocols with on-site training in Milton so they may also care for the critically ill COVID-19 patients. In Milton, our leaders were facing impaired ICU capabilities due to staff quarantines. However, staff are slowly being cleared to work and the ICU capacity is increasing once again, and preparations are continuing.” -Todd Sarge

“Yan Wu, PhD, alumna of our Center for Inflammation has been working tirelessly to secure supplies from China and fundraise to bring more. She delivered 1,000 N-95 masks today—donated by Cubic Inc.! Thanks Yan!” -Heather Derocher

“I would applaud Ed Plant and his team with Tom Xie. In preparation of COVID OR, Ed came up with a lot of great ideas! He and his team have worked tirelessly and efficiently! Today, Ed and Tom set up OR C on Labor and Delivery Floor as a COVID operating room – well done!” -Yunping Li



“I have to thank everybody for the incredible work people have been putting in this past week. The department is working in hyper drive to prepare ourselves for this. You all are heroes. What this department has accomplished in the last five days is amazing. We’ve completely revamped the way we do everything, we’ve gone out to the community hospitals and helped them get prepared, developed protocols, taken care of patients. We’ve expanded in every direction. We’ve set up simulation programs that in regular days would take a year to set up, and we’ve turned them around in two days. I can’t tell you how good our department looks at the hospital and at the health system level as people are just stepping up and getting their job done. So thank you to each and every one of you, we’re going to get through this period together.”

-Danny Talmor

“Thanks to the entire critical care staff for stepping up in this difficult time.

Everyone has contributed significantly during this time to one or many of the following areas:

1. Clinical/Administrative Roles: Many ICU staff have been jumping in and out of various clinical and administrative roles with tremendous flexibility. Moreover, as the pandemic started to hit Boston over the past 2 weeks, our division was among those on the front lines in our hospital intubating COVID-19 suspected patients throughout the ICUs and ED. Also of note, Somnath Bose and fellow, Sean Baskin, were on service in the SICU this week and staffing one of our designated COVID-19 ICUs as we worked quickly to cohort all critically ill COVID-19 PUI/ + patients on the 7th floor ICUs of Rosenberg. Achi Oren-Grinberg was also on ICU night call this

past week with fellow Annette Ilg as the census of COVID PUI/ + significantly increased throughout the hospital.

2. Equipment: Staff have worked hard to acquire our own positive airway pressure respirators (PAPR) from environmental health and urgently training our staff on their use. (Thanks to Ameeka Pannu and all our excellent PAPR trainers).

3. Education: Developing educational materials for critical care staff and the department at large in concert with Pulmonary Critical Care (Ameeka Pannu, Brian O’Gara, Kadhir Murugappan, Somnath Bose). This effort was also aided by the hard work of

our Critical Care Fellowship class (Andre Gossling, Sean Baskin; Annet Ilg and Kaarin Michaelsen). Shaz Shaefi has been spearheading the division’s participation around appropriate utilization of ECMO resources for critically ill patients with COVID-19. I would also like to thank John Mitchell and Vanessa Wong for using their expertise in education to create the website to host the education materials for ease of access for everyone.

This is only a small sample of all the hard work that has been done by the Critical Care division and my sincere apologies for any omissions.” -Todd Sarge

Updates and Progress from the Front Line

Dr. Eikermann: The Faculty Affairs team has begun an initiative to support the Department during the COVID-19 pandemic—a weekly wellness newsletter: This newsletter will do three things:

1. Provide accurate and reliable information to support productivity, not panic;
2. Support the well-being of our clinical staff and support staff;
3. Celebrate our collective successes and express our appreciation.

Just the Facts: Prudence Not Panic

How can we synthesize the conflicting information we receive from national and international media? To assist health workers and researchers working under challenging conditions *The Lancet* has created a **Coronavirus Resource Centre**. This resource brings together new 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) content from across *The Lancet* journals as it is published. This content is free to access, see <https://www.thelancet.com/coronavirus>. The incidence rate of epidemic and pandemics are a part of our modern reality in an increasingly urban, interconnected and heavily populated world. It's clear based on the scenarios observed in Korea, Italy, Germany that both, clinical presentation of COVID-19 and the case-fatality rate, are highly variable. Our outstanding interventions at BIDMC help mitigate the local consequences of the pandemic. Rest assured; while we are at the forefront, we have the tools and approaches to guard against the contraction of the COVID-19 disease. At the same time, we focus on the preservation of our well-being, and we will grow together professionally. We have an exceptionally capable team, and we're ready.

Dr. Ramachandran: Over the last 96 hours, the Anesthesia quality and safety division designed and implemented our multidisciplinary perioperative in-situ team training activities in preparation for the expected influx of patients with COVID-19. We trained >200 staff (from Anesthesia, Surgery, Nursing, PACU, and community teams) yesterday and today in groups of ten to align around several aspects of perioperative care for patients with COVID-19: Preop huddle and preparation, OR setup, Transfer of #CO-

VID-19 patient, Don and doff (re-using sim gowns), as well as Airway handling

The success of this effort reflects the strengths of our quality fellowship, the collaboration with Chief OR Nurse, Elena Canacari and the grit of our staff. This work has resulted in an outpouring of hugely positive feedback and a sense that our system prioritizes the quality of frontline staff preparedness. Many Anesthesia and Nursing staff stepped up as instructors and helped identify latent hazards in our workflows. We will continue these over the next 2 weeks and have already started implementing these in network sites.

We will be producing a training video next week and continue to place all protocols and tools on the [Portal at COVID-19 Central](#).

Dr. Talmor: Talis testing will continue at this time with clinical staff not assigned to the ORs. We will continue rolling out Talis because we have less cases which will make the training easier.

Dr. E. Sundar: N-95 masks are a hot commodity. We are responsibly minding our usage to conserve for future demands. We may be adding security outside the ORs to discourage tempted impostors looking to swipe a box or two.

Dr. Haering: Training continues. We are working on documenting how to set up a remote anesthesia locations and also looking into converting PACU and Holding Areas into ICU areas with anesthesia machines and vents. COVID rooms are set up for cardiac, vascular and general OR cases.

Dr. Hess: OB is prepared and has turned over OR-C to a COVID OR along with preparing four labor rooms for these patients and their babies. With the 20% expected increase in births between April and June each year, they will plan to do scheduled C-sections in the main ORs to off-load the unit for urgent cases.

Dr. Sarge: We are working on clinical protocols, hospital surge capacity with staffing plans as well as education and training for staff redeployment. We have already accomplished basic orientation for 2 new intensivists from within the OR staff pool with strong critical care training and experience (Shahla Siddiqui and Rae Allain). We have also re-oriented 4 "Super



User" CRNAs (All with recent BIDMC ICU experience prior to CRNA school) who will be instrumental in the staffing model for ICU surge capacity if and when a new 40-bed ICU is deployed on the RB-7 Med/Surg floors. The 4 CRNA staff trained thus far are Izzy Demenezes, Kevin Phelan, Liz Heckman and Naira Qazi and we have plans to continue this training within the CRNA pool.

Dr. Robson: Basic Research Laboratories have been shut down and placed in hibernation for the time being. PI's and designated staff visit the labs 2-3 times a week for maintenance and to care for the animals. BILH Clinical Research Guidelines are in place to protect research participants, researchers and the larger community from risk of infection with COVID-19. Importantly, however, SARS-CoV-2 is a new type of viral illness and is the focus of massive investigation across Harvard and Boston. Across BIDMC, and Harvard Medical School, PI's and staff are working towards the formation of "Biorepositories for Potential and Confirmed COVID-19 Cases." Research proposals are being developed with the Evergrande COVID-19 Response Fund, DoD and NIH amongst others for studies on diagnostics and experimental therapeutics. As one example, with Wenda Gao in Antagen Pharmaceuticals Inc, we are seeking approval to test and deploy rapid COVID-19 IgM/IgG Antibody Detection Kits (assay similar to a pregnancy test kit, in principle) to give point of care diagnostic answers.

Dr. Lisbon: All hospital-wide, non-essential in-person research has been halted. A new IRB Board has been created for rapid approval of COVID-19 research. We will be ramping up clinical trials in the ICUs to collect data and learn how best to treat the disease.

Tips to thrive, not just survive at home — alone or with kids!

Most of us enjoy the routine of coming to work, interacting with colleagues, participating in meetings, so the lack of social interaction when working from home can present overwhelming feelings of loneliness, isolation and feeling adrift. The COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity of “social distancing” has increased anxiety and uncertainty in a way that can compromise our mental and physical health.

Here are some important ways to stay balanced, healthy and connected during this challenging time:

Strengthen your inner self. Mindfulness meditation is proven to increase relaxation, productivity and awareness. Bala Subramaniam is leading a 10-minute morning and afternoon breathing and meditation session for all of us. Join virtually with Bala and others in the department each morning at 6:40am and 4:25pm. Check your calendar for the Zoom invite. You can also learn breathing techniques here: <https://youtu.be/HSqdkKeUZ8U> Join us, you'll be amazed at how good you'll feel!



Work Effectively While Sheltering in Place

It takes planning and organization to be efficient and productive while working remotely. Check out these tips to help set you up for success!

<https://bit.ly/3dk1mAv>

<https://www.success.com/working-remotely-heres-how-to-do-it-right/>

Listen to a podcast from the CDC website for Pandemic coping strategies: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJU_xWcmWUY

And a 12-minute audio podcast, on how we cope in these uneasy times (Dr. Sanjay Gupta with Dr. Deepak Chopra) <https://www.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/corona-virus>

Eat right. Working from home gives you a little more time to plan healthy meals and reduce that on-the-go eating.

Keep to a routine. Set your alarm and don't sleep in. Don't stay in your pajamas all day. Take a shower and get to work. Check and answer your emails and handle work responsibilities the same way you do when you are at the office.

Limit watching the news repeatedly. If you find the news upsetting, limit how much of it you watch and get your news from reliable sources.

Get moving on the hour. Take a break every hour to stand and stretch, lift weights, practice yoga or do some cardio. Weather permitting, try to get outside for a walk. We're entering Spring and there is more mood-boosting light and (hopefully) sunshine. If you can walk in a park where there are trees and birds, even better!

Have regular conversations with family and friends and provide mutual support. Keeping social connection is extremely important for psychological health, particularly in difficult times.

Focus on the positive and don't project into the future. Yes, these are uncertain times and we don't know exactly how things will play out. There are things we can control and things we can't.

Reach out to your colleagues regularly. They probably miss you too and will welcome hearing from you!

Laugh often. Find joy in every day, be grateful for 2 things each night when you hit the pillow.

Check in with your kids: Ask how your kids are feeling, no matter what age. Here's a couple helpful links: *Talking to kids about coronavirus* <https://wbur.fm/2xb4RsC> and *Kids at Home –what do you do?* <https://kcrw.co/2Uul305>

Manage your expectations: Your kids won't understand that your work is a priority. Exercise your multitasking skills and work next to them while they paint or draw.

Take some time after tucking in your little ones to plan their day ahead, and yours. Depending on their age, try to help your kids become independent for 45 minutes or so at a time. Enough time for them to focus on one subject of homework.

Eat meals together. Since everyone's social calendar has come to a screeching halt, put back in place some much needed family time— Meals, movies, game night, indoor scavenger hunts and fort building!



A way to help when feeling helpless.

Donate to Dr. Yan Wu's fundraising efforts to bring more N95 masks to Boston. Dr. Wu, a former post-doctoral fellow and instructor in Dr. Simon Robson's Lab, and her Church, Boston Metro-West Boston Church (BMWBC) delivered 1,000 masks this week donated by Cubic Inc. and are currently collecting \$ donations to bring more supplies. [Donate by PayPal at BMWBC's account at \[jjgwang@gmail.com\]\(mailto:jjgwang@gmail.com\).](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bmwbc.org%2Fdonate)

PICK OF THE WEEK: HEADSPACE APP



This is a great suggestion by Dr. Scott Zimmer to help find your happy place. And did you know, Providers can get this meditation and sleep app for one year for free with their NPI#? Go to [Headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com) and sign up!

FAVORITE STAFF RECIPE HOMEMADE HAND SANITIZER

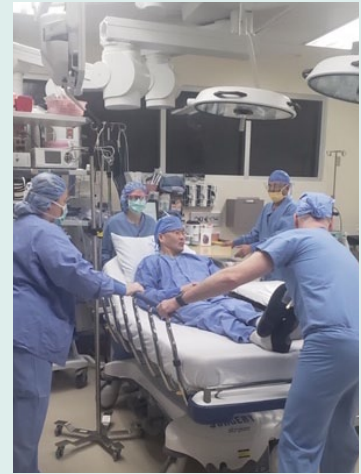
A great suggestion by Dr. Alan Lisbon who received this recipe from his PCP. Order your ingredients on Amazon and get mixin'!

What You Need:

- 2/3 cup Isopropyl alcohol 91% (rubbing alcohol)
- 1/3 cup aloe vera gel OR 1/3 cup glycerin
- 5-10 drops of essential oil in your choice of fragrance (optional)
- A bowl and spoon
- An empty container

Here's How:

- Mix the aloe vera and Isopropyl alcohol together until well blended.
- Add 8-10 drops of essential oil to the mixture for fragrance (if desired), and stir well.
- Pour the finished hand sanitizer into an empty container, seal and label.



Safe Habits at Work

Exposure is a common concern but you can stay safe at work and keep your family safe when you return home. Use common sense:

- **Don't sit one on top of each other** in the lounges. Keep a one yard distance between yourself and your colleagues. Fewer people are working on site which helps. Naturally stand a little further back when conversing,
- **Wash hands frequently.** All of this will keep us healthy. Wear PPE, eye shield, head cover, gown, gloves.
- **Before you go home:** Wash your hands and face/shower, change your scrubs, dispose/store your PPE.
- **Take a moment to think about yourself:** Acknowledge one thing that was difficult—let it go. Consider the things that went well—congratulate yourself.
- **Ask yourself, are you okay?** Leaders are here to support you.
- **Switch your attention to home, rest and recharge.** Remember that you are appreciated—thank you!

-Mary Ann Vann, MD

HAPPINESS IS...

[WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?]

This helpful hint is from Ann Plasso. "Take a minute to recognize what's getting to you. Is it something you can't control? If not, let it go!"



ELIXIR OF THE WEEK

YOGURT SMOOTHIE

Start the day off right with a non-fat yogurt smoothie.

(Freeze your tired strawberries and bananas so they don't go to waste.)

Combine, 1c nonfat yogurt, 1 frozen banana, 5 frozen strawberries, 1/2c water, 5 ice cubes (add honey). Blend and enjoy!



Photo of the Week

We would love to see how YOU are staying healthy over these next few months! Do you have a great place to walk? Dawn Ferrazza snapped photos this morning at Crane Beach, a gorgeous spot in Ipswich, MA next to the Crane Estate. Dawn reports there were families along the beach building sand castles (with plenty of space between!).



News from the System and Hospital Levels

A report from Dr. Talmor

System Level: There is work being done at the healthcare system level to coordinate the ICU response between all of the hospitals. There will be work to distribute, and ventilators to redistribute, and guidelines drafted around care, you'll hear more about this in next few days.

The system is also working really hard on the PPE issue—a front-and-center concern for all of us. As you know, guidelines are continuously updated. We're making sure we have enough PPE for the long haul. Try to conserve while being safe. Protect yourself but be thoughtful. We are not asking for N95 masks for each procedure, because they will just not exist when they're really needed later.



Hospital level: All hospitals in our group have now moved to an emergency management system. The QSI group and others have put together a phenomenal set of simulations for every situation you could think for this epidemic, and obviously it's better to train in a simulation than on your first patient. Everybody from around the network will come to the BI to practice small group simulations in the OR.

Further educational efforts: The ICU groups are rolling out just-in-time training for Critical Care for those asked to move into the ICU, general and specific around the COVID virus and to treatment of patients. The level of treatment ICU patients require is something everyone in this department can do.

We are using the coming days to make sure we perfect all of our SOPs and our procedures, and to ensure everybody gets through simulation. Every day we have before the real wave of patients picks up is incredibly valuable.

Testing: Rapid test for COVID is available (a swab) with results in 6 hours. This will help us eliminate waste related to symptomatic patients who in fact don't have COVID-19. BIDMC can test up to 700 tests a day.

Onward Together

PRODUCTION TEAM

Communications Director Heather Derocher
Communications Specialist Ann Passo
Academic Editors Alan Lisbon
Matthias Eikerman

CONTRIBUTORS THIS WEEK

Danny Talmor
Dawn Ferrazza
Krish Ramachandran
Bala Subramaniam
Todd Sarge
Eswar Sundar | Mike Haering
Phil Hess | Mary Ann Vann
Scott Zimmer

SEND YOUR IDEAS & CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

hderoche@bidmc.harvard.edu

We invite everyone to contribute to this wellness publication. Sharing ideas and supporting each other builds community—making us stronger together.

Please let us know your suggestions for how we can support each other through this.