

To the UW Medicine Community:

We are nine months into this pandemic. For some, that has meant nine months of juggling policy changes and novel approaches to direct patient care. For others, that has meant close to nine months of working from home, feeling isolated from friends and colleagues and often navigating competing challenges of child care or other personal responsibilities. Regardless of where and how you engage with UW Medicine, continuing to work with the disruptions and demands of life is incredibly challenging and can leave us feeling as though we are falling short on both the work and home fronts. We want to pause and give thanks to all of you for showing up as best you can — with kiddos and pets Zoom-bombing your meetings, for navigating the challenges of full hospitals and disrupted clinics, for pushing on without much of the hallway banter and break room snacks that help bind us all together.

As we move through a week that is traditionally marked by food, family and friends — we acknowledge that shifting our traditions can bring with it some sadness. The spots around our table that our families typically fill with folks who are new to town or separated from loved ones will remain empty this year. Whether your house has felt like it is bursting at the seams with family stuck inside, or if you have found yourself living solo and engaging in deep conversations with your sourdough starter, we want to encourage you all to think about what you are doing to take care of yourself each day. Whether it is taking a bit of extra time to drink your morning coffee or taking a walk around the block before you go to sleep — taking small steps to focus on our well-being will help us make it through the weeks and months ahead. If you are feeling isolated and looking for opportunities to connect with others across UW Medicine this week, please contact Anne (anneb7@uw.edu) to join a discussion on how we are taking care of ourselves over the holiday break. We are starting to feel that there is an end to COVID-19's grip on our community on the horizon. Now we must focus on staying physically, mentally and socially healthy as we live toward that brighter spot in the distance.

How to make the most of the long weekend ahead:

- For a festive stroll with wildlife, check out [Zoo Lights at the Woodland Park Zoo](#).
- Looking to hike in some snow? [Denny Creek and the Franklin Fall Trail](#) offers some snow and views (check road conditions before you drive).
- Stay below the snow and break a sweat climbing [Little Si](#) in North Bend.
- For a local trek, walk the loop at [Seward Park](#).
- Weather keeping you indoors? The [Seattle Art Museum](#) wants to share their art with your home.

- As always, [#recreateresponsibly](#) and consider the trails and paths less traveled, bring face coverings and think about the communities you will pass through. Recreate Responsibly has just published new guidelines pertaining to the outdoors for winter.

Caring for others starts with caring for ourselves:

- As we enter another challenging phase of our COVID-19 response, turn to your Peer Supporter colleagues to check in and share the challenges you are facing with someone who has been in your shoes. [Request Peer Support for yourself or refer a colleague in need here.](#)
- Our colleagues in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences continue to offer non-clinical supportive conversations for our community members grappling with the challenges of this moment. [Request a supportive conversation for yourself here.](#)
- If you would prefer to seek support outside of the UW system, look through the Washington COVID Care Network for a [list of providers](#) supporting mental health of healthcare team members.

Caregiver supports:

- **UW Human Resources has created a new landing page for managers and employees to access and navigate caregiver supports.** [Child and family care during COVID-19](#) includes links to information about child care and elder care, flexibility at work, at-home learning resources and self-care resources.
- **New! Unlimited emergency care:** UW Medicine employees who are directly supporting COVID-19 in clinical roles are eligible for unlimited backup care through Bright Horizons through Dec. 31, 2020, or until the University exhausts its annual allotment of backup care uses. Eligible UW employees who are nearing their cap of five Bright Horizons uses per year, may request an increase by emailing childcare@uw.edu, including their name, UW NetID and UW employee ID number in their message.
- **Stay in the loop:** [Join the parenting@uw listserv](#) to receive information about child care resources.

How do we capture our thoughts as we move into a third wave? Into holidays disrupted? Into a future that brings hope, but also many unknowns? We invite folks across our UW Medicine community to share their reflections on a time we are experiencing in some common ways, and some uniquely different, through writing their own [55-word stories](#). We

invite you to read through the collection, launched in early March, to recognize that you are not alone as you experience the challenges of this time.

As we pause to be thankful this week, we wanted to take this moment to thank all of you for the many ways, big and small, that you have supported each other and helped our community get through the impressive series of challenges of the last nine months. It has been inspiring to us and we are truly grateful for the UW Medicine community around us.

With much gratitude,

Anne Browning, PhD

Assistant Dean for Well-Being, UW School of Medicine
Founding Director, UW Resilience Lab
Affiliate Assistant Professor, UW College of Education

Patricia Kritek, MD, EdM

Associate Dean – Faculty Affairs
Professor - Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine
University of Washington School of Medicine