

To the UW Medicine Community,

We've recently had a small rise in COVID-19 numbers both in our hospitals and the community, though they remain relatively low compared to the peaks and waves we have crested over the last year. This moment is reminiscent of last spring when we had flattened our curve and tentatively raised our heads to grapple with what was happening in hotspots like New York City.

This spring as I raise my head and connect with colleagues around the world, I'm hearing about overstrained ICU capacity in Brazil, Kenya and Chile - all reminders that while spring is here for us, the global south is moving into a fall and winter that will be incredibly challenging. As we are moving through our phases and approaching vaccine access for all adults, I think about our continued need for awareness beyond the borders of our neighborhoods, cities, states, and counties and think about how our pandemic does not end until it ends for everyone globally.

We have a long road of recovery ahead of us. Our lives will likely never feel quite like they did heading into the pandemic – and in some ways – that might be for the better.

As we begin to shift gears from response to recovery, take a moment and think about what has changed in your work and in your life more broadly. These moments of big transition give us opportunities to choose what patterns we put in place for ourselves and our teams as we come back together to build a new normal.

Three questions to ask when making choices about the future

- 1. What are changes you want to keep?**
- 2. What are things you miss and can't wait to start doing again?**
- 3. What are things you used to do by default a year ago that are better left in the past?**

For me, I want to keep paying attention to the details of the small things in front of me that I often overlooked as my world got smaller and time slowed over the last year. I miss laughing and commiserating in 3-D with my colleagues at the beginnings and ends of meetings. And I have learned that it is all or nothing for virtual meetings moving forward. Gone are hybrid in-person sessions with virtual attendees where the audio was never very good, and when it was notoriously hard to bring a person on a screen into a filled room.

As we move towards the end of our formal **UW Medicine Gratitude Campaign** (note, we get to keep being grateful!), we want to give a special thanks to the Department of

Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. In response to the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of our community, over 80 faculty and staff from across this department and from the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, volunteered to provide 'supportive conversations' to members of our UW Medicine community navigating their response to the pandemic. Added to this valuable resource, the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, in collaboration with the UWMC Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic, has stepped up again to build a new tier of support for UW Medicine employees and their household members through our new Employee Mental Health Support Program (EMHS). More details on all of the programs listed below can be found on our [EMHS website](#).

Supportive Resources for UW Medicine Faculty & Staff

Help Identifying Mental Health Options

Over 80 people from across UW Medicine have already taken advantage of this new resource. A health navigator can help you identify options available to you, and there is no charge to speak with a navigator. Intake form and correspondence with navigators is completely confidential unless there is risk of harm to self or others. [Intake Form](#).

Free, Supportive Conversations With Clinicians

Request free, confidential conversations with clinician colleagues. UW Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences faculty and staff volunteers are available to provide UW Medicine staff and faculty with free, informal, telephone or video-based conversations.

[Request Supportive Conversations](#)

Peer to Peer Support

Our Peer to Peer Program has navigated over 600 referrals for support in the last year. The program is designed to provide a supportive listener after a stressful event or when your job feels overwhelming. Any care team member can access one on one support from a colleague in their field – a trained peer supporter. [Schedule a conversation for you or a colleague](#).

Free Counseling Through CareLink

UW [CareLink](#) is the employee assistance program provided for PEBB benefits-eligible UW employees, their dependents, and other household members. Offering five free counseling sessions for each issue you work to solve, CareLink can assist with care for adults and minors. [Access CareLink Resources](#)

It has been an incredible challenging year. We are hopeful that with thoughtful reflection on our growth, lessons learned, support from folks around us, and with the time needed to process and recover, we can move toward thriving as individuals and as a community.

With gratitude,

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