



Anne Browning



Trish Kritek

To the UW Medicine Community,

Okay, the start of the school year has been total chaos. We are a couple of weeks in and it is odd to hear of schools that haven't been shaken by COVID exposures in classrooms. With those exposures, parents and families are grappling with concerns for their health and well-being in very palpable ways. As we looked for supports and information to share with all of you, we hit a lot of road bumps given the challenges of providing formal back up care options, or traditional and informal means of support for friends who are in quarantine or isolation. The grandparents cannot come over to help, the playdates and carpools that people often rely on as "release valves" from the pressures of parenting are off the table. We acknowledge that this is simply a hard moment that will likely set the stage for a very challenging autumn as we wait for vaccine access to expand to younger kids.

What can we do? We can continue to bring as much flexibility, grace, and compassion to this moment for our community members who are being impacted.

Here are some links to help people understand some of the complexities and potential resources associated with school exposures:

Isolation or Quarantine

Watch Dr. John Lynch's brief explanation of isolation versus quarantine, given at a recent town hall.

[Watch now](#)

Types of Leave

If you need time away to help you get through quarantine or isolation, there are a few types of leave to consider.

[See Types of Leave](#)

Shared Leave

If you are nearly out of your own leave, request shared leave. You can still hold on to some of your own sick and annual leave.

[Shared Leave Program](#)

All of these challenges are stacking on top of a staffing crisis that spans industries across our country. Thank you to everyone who is continuing to support our community through

providing care for patients and taking care of one another when unexpected challenges hit.

For many people in our community, the past week marked a return to onsite work that was likely filled with joy for some and trepidation for others – or maybe a bit of both. We found joy as people got to see each other face-to-face for the first time in a year and a half and in some cases, it was the first time we met people in-person as we forged many new work connections and welcomed new team members during the pandemic. But trepidation and reflection also came up as people walked through hallways and navigated office spaces for the first time back after what has felt like an inconceivable amount of time away. Whether you never left the building, or you are just returning now – we are all navigating the challenges of establishing new patterns in environments that feel familiar from pre-pandemic times while grappling with the fifth wave hitting our region.

If you are experiencing a hard time in coping with the continued stress of COVID-19, please join the Next Generation Medicine webinar:

Stressed & Depressed: The Effects of COVID-19 on Mental Health with Paula Nurius, Professor, UW Department of Social Work, and Megan Kennedy, Director of the UW Resilience Lab and Co-Chair of the UW Student Well-Being Collaborative.

Thursday, Sept. 23
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Register (Free)

As we see the seasons changing again, there is some beauty in the autumn around us and an opportunity to celebrate a season of harvest. As a way of developing our connections with each other, we would like to invite you to share some favorite soup recipes for the season.



Trish loves soup. Anne loves soup. Soup is about warmth, nourishment, communal sharing, and ingredients coming together and slowly developing over time. Share the soups you love to make this time of year with all of us [here](#). See what soups your colleagues have [shared here](#). We could all use some soup right about now.

With deep gratitude,

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