CRAIN'S 2020
NOTABLE HEALTH CARE HEROES

Reminders of the COVID crisis are everywhere: the ubiquitous masks, social distancing rules and shortages of flour and toilet paper. Yet out of plain sight are the doctors, nurses, EMTs, home health care providers and janitors on the front lines. They work long hours and put their own health on the line to help others. They’re away from their families for extended periods and when they do arrive home, they self-isolate and refrain from hugging their spouses and children.

These health care heroes share harrowing stories of patients who didn’t make it as well as uplifting examples of patients who recovered after days or weeks on a ventilator. Their heroics take so many forms. Since patients’ family members aren’t allowed to visit, some health care workers facilitated phone conversations or video chats. Others sourced personal protective equipment or initiated testing programs. Social service workers sought out homeless people and helped them find shelter and testing. This feature includes profiles of 53 individuals and 32 health care teams—you will find their stories moving and inspiring.

METHODOLOGY: The honorees did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from the nomination materials submitted. This list is not comprehensive. It includes only individuals for whom nominations were submitted and accepted after a review by editors. To qualify for the list, an honoree must be working on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, making an impact and saving lives. Roles considered were doctors, nurses, physician assistants, aides, emergency medical technicians, and maintenance and janitorial workers, among others.

ADVOCATE HEALTH CARE

AMAR CHADAGA
Associate program director, internal medicine, and hospitalist

When the crisis hit, and through the peak and plateau, Dr. Amar Chadaga volunteered to see patients at Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn. He was de facto in charge of attending physician staffing for two non-ICU COVID units. Chadaga wrote in his journal that the hard work “took a toll on me physically, mentally and emotionally but has made me more resilient and a more empathetic physician.”

LUKE NORTHERN
Anesthesiologist
Amita Health Alexian Brothers Medical Center

Dr. Luke Northern volunteered to work at a COVID hospital in New York during April. He left his wife and three children behind to care for the most gravely ill at the height of the crisis. He brought back knowledge and shared his experiences with staff and senior leadership informally and in formal presentations. That helped Alexian Brothers in Elk Grove Village and the Amita system manage the crisis.

MARY FLINK
Respiratory therapist
Amita Health Holy Family Medical Center

After working at Holy Family in Des Plaines for about 40 years, Mary Flink was taking time to travel. After the crisis hit, Flink made herself available to take as many shifts as needed, overseeing the weaning of patients from ventilators. She sits with patients who are alone and frightened, holds their hand and tells them stories to help lessen anxiety.

MOLLY KEEVIL
RN, staff nurse
Amita Health St. Joseph Hospital

When the Chicago hospital received its first COVID patient, Molly Keevil was one of the first to raise her hand. She may be in full personal protective equipment in a room for two hours making sure she has done everything she can for her patient’s physical, mental and emotional well-being. Patients leave voicemails and write letters naming Keevil as a bright light in an otherwise dark time.

STEPHANIE NISIC
RN, night nurse
Amita Health Adventist Medical Center

Stephanie Nisic was a night-shift nurse at the Hinsdale hospital just three months out of orientation when the pandemic hit. Her floor became a COVID unit, and she was among the first night-shift nurses to care for affected patients. Since visitors are restricted, Nisic uses technology to enable patients to speak with family. She became an expert in personal protective equipment and educated colleagues on how to don and remove it.

ARTHUR P. GROVER, JR.
Chairman

I believe in the work the Advocate Health Care employees are performing on the front lines. Their dedication and commitment to saving lives is truly inspiring. I am proud to be part of this organization that is making a positive difference in the lives of our patients and communities.

NUNZIO A. CAGNO
President and CEO

Advocate Health Care

Advocate Health Care is committed to providing the highest quality health care and improving the health of our patients, families, and communities. Our focus on excellence, innovation, and compassion drives our work every day. I am proud to be a part of this organization that is making a positive difference in the lives of our patients and communities.
Since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, the MedEx Ambulance COVID-19 Response Team has provided compassionate medical care and emotional support, often in the most dire circumstances, to thousands of COVID-19 patients as they are safely transported to and from medical facilities.

I would like to thank each and every member of Team MedEx working on the frontlines of this unprecedented pandemic. I appreciate your hard work and courageous effort, and understand the sacrifices you have made. I’m eternally grateful.

I would also like to thank our customers, clients and members of the community for the tremendous love and support you have shown us. You have lifted our morale, given us greater purpose, and reminded us all how fortunate we are to work with so many compassionate people.

Lauren Rubinson
Founder & CEO of MedEx Ambulance Service
The services of Chicago-based Best Home Healthcare, which provides short-term in-home rehabilitation under physician supervision, have been in demand during the COVID-19 crisis. The company has a surplus of disposable personal protective equipment, such as isolation gowns and surgical masks, which keeps clinicians and patients safe. Nurses, physical therapists and occupational therapists visit COVID patients at home after they are discharged from a hospital. They often leave medical devices such as blood pressure cuffs at patient homes so they can monitor their progress. The agency also connects low-income patients to social service organizations that can help supply food and household goods. Some of the firm’s younger clinicians learned how to function in a pandemic from colleagues who are veterans of the AIDS crisis.

**BEST HOME HEALTHCARE**

**HOME HEALTH CARE CLINICIANS**

The services of Chicago-based Best Home Healthcare, which provides short-term in-home rehabilitation under physician supervision, have been in demand during the COVID-19 crisis. The company has a surplus of disposable personal protective equipment, such as isolation gowns and surgical masks, which keeps clinicians and patients safe. Nurses, physical therapists and occupational therapists visit COVID patients at home after they are discharged from a hospital. They often leave medical devices such as blood pressure cuffs at patient homes so they can monitor their progress. The agency also connects low-income patients to social service organizations that can help supply food and household goods. Some of the firm’s younger clinicians learned how to function in a pandemic from colleagues who are veterans of the AIDS crisis.

**EDWARD-ELMHURST HEALTH**

**HEALTH INFECTION CONTROL & PREVENTION**

As the outbreak grew, the team worked collaboratively with stakeholders at Elmhurst Memorial Hospital and Edward Hospital in Naperville to address personal protective equipment shortages, entry screening and contact tracing. The team helped develop clinical guidelines, infection-prevention strategies and workflows. The challenges have been long hours, sleepless nights and patients lost. But there have been uplifting moments as well. The team joined hospital staff in celebrating a young patient’s discharge from Elmhurst Memorial after 45 days. The team participated in the inauguration of the EEH Daffodil project—the installation of daffodil lawn ornaments at both hospitals to acknowledge each COVID-19 inpatient discharged. Team members gathered on a sunny afternoon in April to “plant” bright yellow reminders of survival.

Top row, from left: Dr. Jonathan Pinsky, Mary Anderson, Deb Diamond and Kate Pratt. Bottom row: Dr. David Brezhold, Annemarie Schmucker, Denise Ferri and Sara Czachowicz.
Heroes for Humanity

Our sincere thanks to all of our brave physicians, nurses, caregivers and associates, working on the front lines and behind the scenes, to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Congratulations to the following AMITA Health physicians and associates — honorees of the Crain’s Chicago Business Notable Healthcare Heroes list:

N. Seema Ahmed, MD; St. Alexius Medical Center Hoffman Estates
Mary Flink, RCP; Holy Family Medical Center Des Plaines
Molly Keevil, RN; Saint Joseph Hospital Chicago
Stephanie Nisic, RN; Adventist Medical Center Hinsdale
Luke Northern, MD; Alexian Brothers Medical Center Elk Grove Village
Aron Rubin, MD; Adventist Medical Center Bolingbrook
Frank Schneider, RN; Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center Chicago
Justin Yee, MD; Saint Francis Hospital Evanston

We are grateful for everyone’s courage, compassion and continued commitment.

Learn more about how you can help our heroes at AMITAhealth.org/InItTogether

Help them by doing your part

AMITAHEALTH®
In sickness and in health®

AMITAhealth.org
ERIE FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS
COVID RESPONSE TEAM

Erie formed a response team of five providers and four RNs to deliver testing and support to the highest-risk COVID-exposed and COVID-positive patients. Erie operates 13 community health centers and serves areas disproportionately hit by the crisis. Teams relay federal home care guidelines and the bilingual members provide Spanish-speaking patients with information and support, which increases the likelihood that they will follow health guidance to aid their recovery and help keep their families safe. In addition to care instructions, the team distributes to high-risk patients “COVID care packages” containing a portable pulse oximeter, thermometer and surgical masks for the household.

HEARTLAND ALLIANCE HEALTH
HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAM

The outreach team has connected with hundreds of individuals, in person and over the phone, since mid-March. More than 100 have been linked into the city’s coordinated entry system that helps homeless people find shelter. Another 150 have been connected with vital health care services including COVID-19 testing. At least 80 individuals were assisted with obtaining stimulus checks, even without an address or bank account. The COVID crisis has spotlighted the homeless population, estimated at 80,000 in the city, because it’s harder to double up in someone else’s home. The Heartland team reaches individuals at encampments and homeless shelters, under viaducts and on Lower Wacker Drive. Team members provide testing, personal protective equipment, food, connections to housing and clinics, and human contact at a time when homeless people are isolated.

Congratulations to our COVID-19 Response Team, named one of Crain’s Healthcare Heroes Teams.

We’re celebrating the entire NorthShore University HealthSystem COVID-19 Response Team. Their tireless efforts led to quickly converting a large community hospital into a dedicated COVID-19 facility, securing PPE for our entire staff, developing significant phone and e-consult resources for our communities and much more. All to ensure the safety of our patients, visitors, staff and the communities we serve.
Thank you to everyone on our team who has bravely helped patients and each other. Thank you to our office staff for providing support to our visiting clinicians. And thank you to the clinicians who have been bravely making home visits to COVID-19 positive patients, and non-COVID-19 positive patients.

You all helped make history. But there is so much more history to make!

Thank you to the clinicians who directly cared for COVID-19 positive patients.

Abdul-Mannan Shamsuddin  
Aisha Noah  
Caitlin Grimwood  
Christine Skelton  
Frances Shaw  
Ifefikayo Oyelami  
Janique Bata  
Jaquetta Johnson  
Jazmin Jordan  
Jelian Steward  
Jelisa Scott  
Joanne Hill  
Jorie Curry  
Julia Padron  
Lookman Muhammed  
Marsha Green  
Michah Brinez-Cenzon  
Michelle Tan  
Mohamed Ibrahim  
Tiffany Green  
Victoria Nichelson

Thank you to the clinicians who took care of our non-COVID-19 patients.

Allan Santos  
Alonso Avina  
Anwar Adams  
Bayan Abuzir  
Carly Decker  
Courtney Britton  
Danielle Walker  
Frank Ramirez  
Joseph Estrella  
Kim Muhammad-El  
Mary Marcano  
Maureen Huston  
Mervat Samra  
Queen Osaremwinda  
Ralph Vincent Cenzon  
Schuyler Johnson  
Theresa Andrews-Singleton

Thank you to our great office and support staff, who made it all possible.

Angelica Avilez  
Feras Abdelrahman  
Florence (Swarnalatha) Gadwala  
Joanna Delgado  
Katrina Woods  
Iqbal Shariff  
Shirley Johnson  
Yewande Awoyemi
Dr. Lori Halvorson fought to get permission to enter nursing homes and hospitals to fit, fix and adjust hearing aids so patients who were isolated from their families could hear them on the phone or in online conversations. Halvorson says it was particularly rewarding to fit a blind patient with hearing aids so he could hear when people came into his room in the nursing home.

Dr. Reshma Mohiuddin supports inpatient COVID units as well as outpatient COVID testing. Taking care of a jailed COVID patient at Cermak Health Services, a veteran with PTSD, was a heartbreaking experience for Mohiuddin. She learned that his estranged stepmom wanted to be there for him, but the rules did not allow it. Mohiuddin was able to arrange a FaceTime call, and he was able to say goodbye.

With Howard Brown’s dental clinics closed during the outbreak of the coronavirus, Dr. Robin Gay and her team mobilized to source personal protective equipment for frontline providers. She also helped develop and implement procedures for ensuring staff were in sanitized scrubs every day. And she assisted in the development of a video detailing safe and secure ways to wear and dispose of the equipment.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Dr. Maya Green was the architect of Howard Brown’s testing in tents outside clinics in Englewood and Hyde Park. Green led the organization to join with Project Vida for testing in Little Village, located in the ZIP code with the state’s highest concentration of COVID-19 cases. She also spearheaded partnerships for testing in Austin and other high-need communities using a mobile unit.

After the COVID-19 outbreak hit, Dr. Wen-ho Yang supported community testing at Project Vida sites and on Howard Brown’s mobile unit in partnership with Mobile Care Chicago. Yang’s work contributed to more than 4,725 tests provided on the mobile unit and in West Side communities—60 percent of Howard Brown’s total COVID-19 tests as of late May. Fluency in Spanish and Mandarin facilitated communication with affected families.

When the virus hit Chicago, the Innovative team tested hundreds of patients in the facility’s outdoor medical tent. The team performed more than 5,000 COVID-19 tests and provided follow-up care. Innovative was among the first clinics in Chicago to offer antibody testing, using the Abbott SARS-CoV-2 test, and has tested 8,000 patients. CEO Dr. Rahul Khare expanded the clinic’s daily schedule to 16 hours and expanded the team by 40 percent. Members of the remote telemedicine team see patients online. Clinic physicians travel to area businesses to perform virus swab testing on employees before they return to work. Khare and team members also counsel business owners on best practices. Children have decorated pictures and messages of hope for the clinic’s windows, and neighbors sent treats to the team.

The West Side clinic developed free walk-up and drive-up testing. Clinicians complete more than 400 telehealth visits daily and offer follow-up COVID monitoring, ongoing medical care and prescription assistance. The center has performed more than 1,700 COVID-19 tests for community members, identifying more than 500 positive diagnoses. As part of a community-driven pandemic response for homeless people, the center cares for older at-risk adults. They have been moved to isolation care in a former downtown hotel, where they receive medical support, daily meals and help finding permanent housing. For many, it’s the first time in years they have received reliable access to medications and consistent mental, medical and spiritual support, as well as stable, quality individual housing.
Dr. Michael Markos runs two COVID-19 units at Mercy Hospital, caring for vulnerable populations that have been disproportionately affected by the virus. The challenging part of treating critically ill patients is that they don’t have family and friends surrounding them during the most difficult times of their lives, Markos says. The nursing team and respiratory therapists stepped in as family. “I’ve held the hands of dying patients, I have prayed over the heads of patients at their request,” he says. One uplifting moment was seeing a patient who had been intubated for 40-plus days get discharged to rehabilitation.

On a personal level, he says, it is trying to have to come home to a daily decontamination ritual in the garage and isolate himself from his wife and three daughters.

RICHARD “RICKY” FRANCISCO
Nurse
Ricky Francisco is a nurse in the surgical intensive care unit, which continues to see a steady influx of the most critical patients. He and other nurses mastered the technique of placing patients in a prone position to improve breathing and trained a team to assist other units. While Francisco cared for COVID patients, his mother and brother were hospitalized with the virus.

MARK CICHON
Professor and chair, Department of Emergency Medicine
In the early stages of the COVID crisis in Illinois, Dr. Mark Cichon had an idea to help protect his team. He worked with Windy City Plastics to design an acrylic box that could protect physicians when intubating patients. The Physician’s Protection Box has been made available to hospitals around the Chicago area and the rest of the nation.

DANIEL HAZLETT
Project manager
In late March, Daniel Hazlett was granted administrative leave from his job at Discover to assist the state and city in launching and operating the McCormick Place COVID-19 Alternate Care Facility, which was designed to alleviate pressure on Chicago’s health care facilities. Hazlett, who is also a student at the Kellogg School of Management, was part of the team that had 14 days to convert the convention center into a hospital.

MATTIE KENNEDY
Transitional care nurse
Mattie Kennedy manages the transition of care for Medicaid patients discharged from the hospital. The nonprofit Medical Home Network, which is digitally connected to 30 hospitals as well as 400 primary care medical homes and behavioral health and community-based organizations, serves 320,000 patients in Cook County. Kennedy speaks with patients in person or by phone, listens to their concerns and explains the steps they’ll need to take to protect themselves and others. For a patient discharged after a two-week hospital stay, Kennedy made sure that she could self-quarantine and had someone to help her. Kennedy was able to have masks and other safety supplies delivered to the patient’s home so her son could visit and be around his mother from a safe distance.

DIANA SOTO
Director of nursing/clinical manager
Diana Soto cares for more than 70 COVID-19 patients referred to the Chicago provider of home health care services by area safety-net hospitals. Soto educates patients on how to manage their illness, monitor their temperature and oxygen levels, and avoid spreading the virus to others in their home. Her knowledge of sign language and fluency in Spanish enhance communication. For patients in self-quarantine, Soto may be the only person they see.
**THE NIGHT MINISTRY**

**STEPHAN KORUBA**

Senior nurse practitioner

As a member of the ministry’s street medicine team, Stephan Koruba provides health care to individuals living on the streets and supervises other nurse practitioners. Koruba has spearheaded initiatives to attend to the challenges faced by Chicago’s homeless. He established connections at the CTA that allowed the team to provide screenings and food to the increased numbers of individuals who were riding the trains at night because they were afraid of contracting the virus in a shelter. Koruba recalls that the first week that the shelter-in-place order was in effect, “we were the only service providers out on the street. Our clients were anxious and scared. Sitting there and talking with them, it was obvious that we were filling a role no one else was filling.”

**METRO PARAMEDIC SERVICES**

**PARAMEDICS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS**

Employees of Metro Paramedic Services who operate advanced life support ambulances and provide emergency medical services are integrated into fire departments throughout the Chicago suburbs. They have provided service throughout the pandemic, often putting themselves and their families at risk of contracting the virus. At the onset of the pandemic, employees were challenged by the nationwide shortage of personal protective equipment. Paramedic crews sometimes were required to reuse the equipment until they could become resupplied by the hospitals. They take extra measures to decontaminate themselves before returning home to their families.

**NORTHSURE UNIVERSITY HEALTHSYSTEM**

**COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAMS**

NorthShore leaders established Glenbrook Hospital as the system’s COVID hospital, expanding the ICU, emergency department and an inpatient unit. The system established four immediate care COVID supersites and a drive-thru testing site. The teams completed 75,000 COVID tests, including more than 1,800 drive-thru tests. Team members handled 26,000 immediate care visits and 21,000 e-visits. They answered more than 33,000 calls on the system’s health hotline and also reached out to patients recovering at home. The hospital cared for 800 patients, and team members went to great lengths to ease their difficulties. After a critically ill patient spelled “rosary,” her nurse drove home after a 12-hour shift to get her one. Another nurse held a patient’s hands while a physician arranged a video conversation with family.

**NORTHEASTERN MEDICINE**

**RAINA LEON**

RN, labor and delivery Northwestern Memorial Hospital

When the virus hit, Raina Leon’s unit in labor and delivery at Prentice Women’s Hospital asked for volunteers to treat COVID patients. Laboring patients can easily aerosolize the virus, creating a high-risk environment for the staff. Leon had to tell patients that if they tested positive, they might have to be separated from their newborns. She spent time with the laboring moms, watching wedding videos or singing ballads to distract them from epidurals.

**PATRICE ROSENBERG**

Registered nurse Northwestern Memorial Hospital

With eight years of experience working in the medical ICU and emergency room, Patrice Rosenberg has been working four or five 12-hour shifts per week in a COVID-19 unit. She stepped up to become a regular charge nurse of a unit, and she has been responsible for training nurses with less experience who have transferred over to help during the crisis. Rosenberg was interviewed by several area TV stations.

**NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE**

**MELISSA SIMON**

Vice chair of clinical research, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

In addition to caring for COVID-19 patients, Dr. Melissa Simon has raised awareness of how the pandemic has deepened health inequities. She is part of the mayor’s COVID-19 Recovery Task Force and the Illinois Department of Public Health COVID-19 Equity Team. She’s hosted public conversations on topics such as mental health and gun violence. A practicing physician, teaching professor and researcher, Simon also is faculty director of Northwestern’s Center for Health Equity Transformation.

**DAVID ZICH**

Emergency medicine specialist Northwestern Medicine

Dr. David Zich has treated patients in the COVID unit at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. To inform and enable his patients to understand the facets and risks of the pandemic, he began publishing an email letter explaining the complex topics in understandable language. He has appeared on Fox 32 to answer viewer questions about the pandemic. Staying abreast of the onslaught of information and misinformation has been a challenge, he says.
When Northwestern started converting nursing units to care for COVID-19 patients, 12 West was the second surgical floor to shift. Led by manager Sarah A. Cummins, the team includes a staff educator, clinical coordinators, secretaries, suppliers, X-ray techs, nurses, and respiratory, physical and occupational therapists, as well as staffers in housekeeping, transportation and EKG. In late March and early April there was tension. Patients would rapidly change for the worse in minutes. The staff would take a mindfulness break together for two minutes every shift. They have supported one another through stressful days and gathered to "clap someone home." The staff danced for a patient as she left on her birthday. They dimmed the lights at the station, turned on a disco ball and sang as she went home with tears of joy.

**Congratulations to**

**Larry K. Kociolek, MD, MSCI**

Attending Physician, Division of Infectious Diseases  
Medical Director, Infection Prevention and Control  
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago  
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine  
Irene Heinz Given and John La Porte Given Professorship in Pediatrics

for being selected as one of  
**Crain’s Chicago Business**  
**2020 Notable Health Care Heroes.**
HOSPITAL WORKERS ARE MAKING THOUSANDS OF DIFFERENCES

For the past several months, our hospital workers have dedicated their lives to battling COVID-19 — both on the frontlines and in support roles, working together to provide exceptional patient care. Our doctors, nurses, technicians, transporters, pharmacists, and other team members — all supported by our information technology and supply chain personnel — have consistently risen to the occasion to tend to our most vulnerable patients.

From everyone at UChicago Medicine and Ingalls Memorial — THANK YOU — for the sacrifices you make every day. Your dedication, commitment and courage deserve our deepest gratitude and admiration.
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Special thanks to UChicago Medicine’s Crain’s Healthcare Heroes:
» Adult Emergency Department
» Clinical laboratories
» COVID-19 cohort unit
» Environmental Services team
» Infection Control team
» COVID-19 call center and swabbing team at Ingalls Memorial
» Resident Inpatient/ICU COVID-19 unit
» Spiritual care
» Teletriage nurses
» And all of the other countless teams who serve patients every day.

UChicagoMedicine.org
RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

COMMAND CENTER LEADERSHIP

Rush University Medical Center

Drs. Omar Lateef and Richa Gupta led Rush’s response to the crisis, serving as CEO and chair of the Command Center, respectively. Through their efforts, the Rush system was able to play a key role in flattening the curve in Chicago, while also caring for the state’s most severe COVID cases. The hospital was physically changed to provide more beds and increase staff. The team moved to clear needed space and shut down elective surgery. In three weeks, facilities and operations were transformed in ways that would have taken years under typical circumstances. The hospital was physically changed to provide care and emergency services workers across the state who share resources and source personal protective equipment. Gayeski Pirajno helped arrange the donation of 66,000 N95 masks and 1,400 P95 masks to 60 hospitals and 80 private clinics, nursing homes and home health agencies. “At the beginning, it was scary to know how many places didn’t have access to PPE to take care of COVID-19 patients,” she says. Through the collective, she was put in touch with private donors who wanted to make anonymous donations of PPE to hospitals. Gayeski Pirajno also works in COVID-19 units at Rush Oak Park.

PULMONARY CONSULTANTS

NASSER ZAKIEH

Pulmonologist, critical care specialist

As the ICU director at OSF Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park, Dr. Nasser Zakieh treats critically ill COVID patients who have life-threatening complications. Zakieh and his team saw the number of patients on ventilators triple as the virus spread. Many at Little Company of Mary didn’t see family for two weeks. One patient with severe COVID pneumonia told Zakieh, “Please stay safe. We need you.”

ROSELAND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

TIM EGAN

Chief executive officer

Recognizing that the state had no initial plans to offer COVID-19 testing on the Far South Side, Tim Egan opened up the front of Roseland Community Hospital for nasal swab and antibody testing. The hospital, which serves an African American community, was one of the first to offer public testing. At the start, Roseland was testing 500 people a day, and cars were lined up for several blocks. It has performed more than 15,000 tests, including for Chicago police officers, firefighters, CTA bus drivers and first responders. After an employee in the kitchen at Roseland tested positive for COVID-19, the staff went into quarantine, and the kitchen was closed. Faced with feeding patients and staff, Egan tapped his personal network to ensure hot meals arrived every day.

7 NORTH ATRIUM GENERAL MEDICINE (COVID-19 UNIT)

Rush University Medical Center

7N was charged with transforming the unit to accommodate COVID patients within 48 hours. The nurses and nurse leaders mobilized a plan to meet the environmental, educational and safety needs of patients and staff. 7N leaders collaborated with acute and intensive care teams that had been caring for these patients since Rush’s first COVID admission in March. A particularly special moment occurred when a 7N staff nurse advocated for a COVID-positive patient whose sister was in the ICU. When the condition of the sister in the ICU worsened, the nurse won support for additional shifts to help the team when there was a spike in the number of patients. On her days off, she prepared snacks for her team.

RUSH COVID CLINIC

In early March, Rush established the COVID clinic, an area outside of the emergency department where patients suspected of carrying the virus could be tested without risk of infecting others. The clinic provided COVID-19 testing for Rush employees, first responders and other members of the community experiencing symptoms.

Megan Gayeski Pirajno

Internal medicine hospitalist

At Rush Oak Park, Dr. Megan Gayeski Pirajno started the Illinois Medical Collective on Facebook. It is made up of more than 2,600 health care and emergency services workers across the state who share resources and source personal protective equipment. Gayeski Pirajno helped arrange the donation of 66,000 N95 masks and 1,400 P95 masks to 60 hospitals and 80 private clinics, nursing homes and home health agencies. “At the beginning, it was scary to know how many places didn’t have access to PPE to take care of COVID-19 patients,” she says. Through the collective, she was put in touch with private donors who wanted to make anonymous donations of PPE to hospitals. Gayeski Pirajno also works in COVID-19 units at Rush Oak Park.
KATHRYN “KATIE” GERSTER
RN care coordinator
Rush Oak Park Hospital
Katie Gerster was instrumental in establishing the Rush drive-thru testing clinic at Rush Oak Park. She stepped up to train staff, prepare the site and begin testing. She worked outside, sometimes in the cold and rain, providing results in 20 minutes or less. Gerster provided the latest information on COVID so the patients, who were often worried and sick, could monitor their symptoms.

PAMELA KATZ
Nurse
Rush University Medical Center
Oncology nurse Pamela Katz switched to caring for COVID patients when Rush saw a spike in cases. She worked in and outside the ICU, bringing sensitivity and compassion from her experience helping cancer patients. Nursing is the second career for Katz, who spent 20 years in marketing and ran her own digital media agency, Charlotte’s Web Marketing.

KEVIN KING
Radiation oncology resident
Rush University
When the outbreak hit, the residents of the radiation oncology team were assigned to front-line roles, and Dr. Kevin King was moved to a unit to treat patients stricken with cancer and COVID-19. King was there for patients through bad times and worse, often in the final moments. He worked with family members to set up video calls with their loved ones in the hospital.

DEBORAH MALLERS
Psychiatric liaison nurse
Rush University Medical Center
Since the pandemic, Deborah Maller’s focus has expanded to help medical and support staff deal with the unprecedented and unpredictable stress of work as well as additional pressures of home, home schooling, family health and other concerns. She’s worked with psychiatrists and doctors to help front-line staff who have lost family or experienced anxiety or PTSD. Many will need her more than ever after this prolonged stressful time.

TYLER WEISS
Respiratory therapist
Rush University Medical Center
During the crisis, Tyler Weiss helped develop the prone-positioning process that helps patients get off a ventilator. He also is involved in placing patients who are not on the ventilator in the prone position to reduce their need for mechanical ventilation. Flipping patients to lie on their stomachs opens airways in lungs that are compressed by fluid and inflammation. Weiss trained other team members in the technique and has contributed to manuals and protocols.

MASTER’S STUDENTS, RESPIRATORY THERAPY
Rush University
Rush students weren’t asked to volunteer for clinical work during the pandemic, but an exception was made for the respiratory care program because of the extraordinary need and the students’ advanced learning. These students, who work under the supervision of respiratory therapists, assess how a patient is responding to the ventilator’s flow of air, monitor minute-by-minute details and report any notable changes. They also routinely reposition patients and suction away excess saliva. The students act as an extension of the respiratory staff, allowing the therapists to attend to the most acutely ill COVID patients.

CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE & LIFELONG LEARNING
Rush University Medical Center
When COVID hit in March, the program that provides continuing education for physicians, nurses and pharmacists had to cancel live events and regroup. By the end of April, the program had transferred to a virtual platform and succeeded in reaching 1,300 individuals. The team produces virtual programs for attendees from multiple disciplines who earn continuing medical education or continuing nursing education credits. Team members work with Rush health care providers and their colleagues from other institutions to provide specialty-focused webinars, panels and recorded lectures. The team curated a variety of COVID-19-related resources and produced micro-learnings to support learners at Rush and beyond.

SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATIONS TEAM
Rush University Medical Center
The team’s primary goal was to make sure Rush employees had the proper personal protective equipment to care for COVID patients. Team members quickly responded to the rapid increase in demand by sourcing and procuring goods through multiple channels, building and rolling out additional supply rooms, and providing 24/7 coverage. Changes to processes and inventory levels were put in place to ensure critical provisions were available through the peak of the crisis. Team members also developed a process to receive donated goods. They coordinated with Rush Copley Medical Center and Rush Oak Park Hospital to ensure that the system was supplied. And they worked with other health systems in the Chicago area to source PPE when there were shortages.
CRAIN'S 2020 HEALTH CARE HEROES

A SAFE HAVEN FOUNDATION
NELI VAZQUEZ ROWLAND
President and co-founder
Concerned about the vulnerability of homeless people, Neli Vazquez Rowland collaborated with Rush University Medical Center and the city of Chicago to add a COVID-19-positive isolation space to the foundation’s West Side shelter. The 100-bed space houses people who have symptoms or who have tested positive. She is a founding member of the Chicago Homelessness & Health Response Group for Equity, which represents health and homeless organizations that worked together to respond to COVID-19.

SHIRLEY RYAN ABILITYLAB
COVID CARE UNIT
The unit serves patients recovering from COVID-19. That recovery can require extensive rehabilitation, with many patients having trouble swallowing, talking and walking. They may have poor endurance and dexterity, kidney problems and cognitive issues. Researchers developed and deployed a wearable device to continuously track COVID-like symptoms in patients and clinicians. The clinical team leveraged technology to coordinate discharges and prepare patients to return to their homes and communities. The team was particularly moved by the story of a couple married for 40 years, Gladys and Clifton Wilson. Stricken by the virus, they were both on ventilators for weeks, and Gladys fell into a coma. Thankfully, the parents of three and grandparents of six survived and were reunited for rehab at the AbilityLab.

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SIMPLE LABS

RICHARD LARIOSA
Medical technologist

Before COVID-19, Richard Lariosa was handling general lab testing for infectious diseases and had just passed the U.S. medical licensing examination. He now serves as the lead COVID-19 technologist, testing samples from hospitals, nursing homes, outpatient clinics, community health centers and drive-thru testing sites. Demand for testing grew so rapidly that Lariosa and his team worked nights and weekends to keep up.

SILVER CROSS HOSPITAL

6TH FLOOR NURSING UNITS

As the pandemic reached Silver Cross Hospital in mid-March, the New Lenox facility converted its sixth-floor nursing units into COVID-dedicated areas to isolate and care for these ill patients. The floor became the COVID epicenter. Early on, the nurses assumed added responsibilities to conserve personal protective equipment and limit the number of staff entering isolation rooms. With visitor restrictions in place, they facilitated patient-family communications with worried loved ones, delivering positive news and heartbreaking goodbyes. They expanded their nursing skills, becoming experts in assessing respiratory function, critical lab values and heart rhythms, as well as in proning patients to improve oxygenation and avoid mechanical ventilation. Initial doubts were replaced by certainty that they can master new skills, operate in a crisis and adapt to any situation.

SUNITE MOHAPATRA
Division chief, Section of Infectious Diseases
Sinai Health System

A specialist in the treatment of infectious diseases, Dr. Sunita Mohapatra has been on the front lines, caring for COVID patients. She led Sinai’s response, developing the hospital’s surge plans, planning for PPE needs and developing infection control procedures to protect current and future patients as well as her fellow caregivers. She recalls asking a patient to breathe so she could listen to the patient’s lungs. The patient responded, “Sorry, doctor, I just can’t breathe.” Mohapatra has had former patients call in to check on her. “It’s interesting the way the tables have been turned to take care of the caregivers,” she says. When she comes home at night, she stays away from her family until she has showered and changed her clothes.

KENDALL MOSBY-THOMPSON
Nurse
Mount Sinai Medical Center

Before COVID, Kendall Mosby-Thompson was tending to victims of accidents and gunshot wounds. He subsequently pivoted to caring for patients with the virus, many of whom had underlying conditions. He was shaken by one patient—a young pregnant woman who was COVID-positive and couldn’t see her family. Fortunately, she was treated and released. Mosby-Thompson struggles with the risks to himself and his family but feels responsible for his patients.

Congratulations to Dr. Karen Kaul, named one of Crain’s Healthcare Heroes.

We’re celebrating Dr. Karen Kaul, Clinical Chair, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at NorthShore. She led the NorthShore Lab Team in developing the first independent COVID-19 test in the State of Illinois. Since March, we have conducted over 100,000 tests to date—a groundbreaking accomplishment in the fight against this global pandemic. Thank you, Dr. Kaul.

northshore.org/COVID19
SUPERIOR AMBULANCE

SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM

The Special Response Team was deployed to New York for two months to support emergency medical services during the pandemic. The team is called upon when there is an emergency in the region such as a hurricane. They can set up field hospitals, provide 911 response, assist search and rescue teams or aid in evacuations. The New York deployment involved 26 team members and eight ambulances: five crews from Illinois, two crews from Indiana and one from Michigan. They were used to run 911 and interfacility transports. Superior rotated crew members during March and April, with everyone doing a two-week minimum stint—some stayed longer. Everyone went to work knowing the risks of exposure.

SWEDISH HOSPITAL

INTERMEDIATE CARE UNIT STAFF

This unit became the hospital’s COVID Critical Care facility, housing critically ill patients. The unit was short-staffed as some co-workers had contracted the virus and were at home. The team members learned on the job and adjusted to evolving recommendations on COVID-19 management. On one day, the 16-bed unit was full, with every patient on a ventilator and multiple intravenous medications. Many patients needed proning, the process in which the patient is flipped onto his or her stomach to open up airways and make it easier to breathe. Young nurses learned how to administer paralytic drugs and provide appropriate monitoring. And team members learned how to troubleshoot the ventilators as the respiratory therapists often were busy. They’ve been performing nonstop since mid-March.

MEDICAL HOME NETWORK celebrates our very own

Mattie Kennedy

Transitional Care Nurse RN BSN

One of Crain’s 2020 Notable Health Care Heroes

We would like to extend our gratitude to Mattie, our Transitions of Care team and all frontline workers who have gone above and beyond for the Chicago area during the COVID-19 crisis.
Saluting our Silver Cross Heroes

At Silver Cross Hospital in New Lenox, we have heroes working in every area, on every floor, and they’re all focused on one thing: providing an unrivaled healthcare experience for our patients.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged hospitals around the world and right here in our own community. We salute all of our healthcare workers...from the ER to the 6th floor and every department in between...for their tireless bravery, dedication and commitment to our patients.

As we have for generations, Silver Cross will continue to be here when you need us most.

silvercross.org

THREE CROWNS PARK

GERALD “GERRY” FARINAS
Director of life enrichment

At the Evanston retirement home, Gerry Farinas pivot-ed to engage one-on-one with residents who are sheltering in their apartments and cannot participate in group activities or see visitors. When a resident was diag-nosed with COVID early in the pandem-ic, Farinas donned personal protective equipment to visit, make him laugh and connect him with family members.

THRESHOLDS

HOMELESS OUTREACH PROJECT

During the outbreak, team members stepped up interactions with homeless people. Of the estimated 80,000 people in Chicago experiencing housing instabil-ity or homelessness, about a third suffer from severe mental illnesses, the group says. Many homeless people were shut out of the public places they normally go for water and to get out of the weather, such as fast food restaurants and libraries. They are vulnerable to disease and infection due to their lack of access to health care, safe places to stay and places to wash. Thresholds staff worked to keep homeless people out of the hospital by teaching them about wearing masks, social distancing and hygiene. The team was able to get several street homeless people housed and connect them to health care.
ENVIROMENTAL SERVICES

UChicago Medicine

UChicago Medicine’s Environmental Services staff played key roles on the front lines. EVS workers volunteered to work on the COVID-only floors at UChicago hospitals, putting aside personal concerns to ensure patient safety. The members sanitize every room daily and work as a team to clear trash and linens to give each patient the best chance of recovery. EVS teams focus on guaranteeing a safe, quick turnaround of rooms after patients are discharged. The switch to disposable food service trays meant a significant increase in the volume of refuse that EVS handled during the crisis. The 120 EVS team members working in COVID areas endure hours of wearing sometimes-constraining PPE as they decontaminate high-risk areas and surfaces to protect patients and their clinical colleagues.

COVID COHORT UNIT

UChicago Medicine

As the pandemic set in, nursing leaders pivoted to prepare COVID-positive units at the flagship hospital. Team members went beyond their normal roles, even absorbing ancillary services, such as nutrition support and conserving personal protective equipment. While their clinical skills helped get the vast majority of patients healthy and discharged, their care for patients’ emotional well-being made a lasting impact. Nurses used tablets and smartphones to connect patients with loved ones at home. In some cases, staff members provided a virtual face-to-face connection during an ill person’s last moments. Thank-you notes from former patients boosted staff morale. “We’ve had people calling and saying, ‘You saved my life. I wouldn’t be here without your nurses,’” says Stephanie Blossomgame, clinical director, general medicine service line/procedure cart services.

CLINICAL LABORATORIES

UChicago Medicine

The staff in three clinical laboratories worked together to support widespread COVID testing, particularly for residents in underserved South Side communities. In addition to performing COVID-19 testing of UChicago Medicine’s patients and at drive-thru swab collection sites, the team supported testing for community hospitals, clinics and skilled nursing facilities. Without this help, these organizations would have had to rely on outside labs where results could take days. UChicago Medicine provides swabs for specimen collection by community providers. Those specimens are sent back to UChicago Medicine’s lab, where results are reported within 24 hours. Skilled nursing facilities were among the first community providers to be supported by this outreach effort. After receiving positive results, these facilities were able to collaborate with infectious disease specialists on care plans for infected patients.

ADULT EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

UChicago Medicine

When fears of a pandemic grew, the 250-person team knew their ER would be among the first places sick people would turn. But it wouldn’t just be coronavirus patients. Life-threatening injuries still needed trauma care. The team quickly pivoted to build two separate but equally busy ERs under one roof—a “hot zone” for those with COVID symptoms and a “cold zone” for others. To expand capacity, the team modified the ambulance bay to become a patient care space and added 80 chairs for low-acuity patients in an unused space. When physicians pushed to try an unusual technique—high-flow nasal cannulas—to avoid intubating patients struggling to breathe, engineers also worked to build anterooms to protect staff from aerosolized droplets the devices create.

CALL CENTER AND SWABBING TEAM

UChicago Medicine Ingalls Memorial

At the hospital in south suburban Harvey, the team formed in March to assemble and coordinate an efficient process for screening and testing. A multidisciplinary group mobilized to establish a triage call center and three curbside testing sites. One site handles 170 tests a day, and the call center fields between 200 and 300 calls daily. The team schedules testing appointments, calls individuals with test results and ensures the swabbing stations have supplies. Team members have helped local and state leaders understand the extent of positive cases in the community. Call center staff made a difference by listening to concerns, answering questions and coordinating care. The team overcame challenges of bad weather, learning new roles and, in some cases, caring for sick family members at home.

SPIRITUAL CARE

UChicago Medicine

The Spiritual Care team offers emotional, mental and spiritual support to patients and their families. The group of eight chaplains has a 24/7 presence at UChicago Medicine and Comer Children’s. Families and friends aren’t able to physically comfort and advocate for their loved ones like they normally would, so chaplains have been a bridge of support, especially during end-of-life care. The team also started the practice of checking in on the well-being of family members. Chaplain Stephanie Welsh described the time a patient with a grim prognosis was being intubated. Welsh worked with their nurse to set up a FaceTime call with family. Fortunately, the patient recovered and was discharged but says the call brought peace to a family expecting the worst.
When COVID-19 arrived in Chicago, Rush took a lead role in treating the most difficult cases and flattening the curve. As one of the most infectious disease-ready hospitals in the country, the entire Rush community demonstrated calm and preparedness, maintaining a safe environment to provide the highest quality of care. Making rounds, you could see preparedness in the eyes of every member of the Rush University Medical Center team.

From the Command Center to our teachers and patient facing staff and supply procurement, these Rush honorees represent all who set aside personal concerns to save lives.

You are all heroes!
We warmly congratulate Smitha Arekapudi and Daniel Hazlett for taking quick and thoughtful action to help others in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

We are proud of you both for exemplifying the kind of leaders we develop at the Kellogg School of Management, those who create impact and trust across cultures and communities.

Today’s changing marketplace will continue to challenge the way we think and do business. It’s causing us all to reflect on our purpose and how we show up in life.

Kellogg’s Executive and Evening & Weekend MBA programs can help you meet these changes head-on by investing in your personal and professional growth with real-time returns.

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Congratulations to the Intermediate Care Unit (IMCU) team at Swedish Hospital. Faced with the coronavirus, they converted the IMCU into our COVID-19 Critical Care Unit, taking on the most critically ill COVID patients. They have worked tirelessly, providing outstanding care for their patients—and compassion for family members, often updating them on the phone or through Facetime. Thank you for exemplifying teamwork and passion for healthcare.

Swedish Hospital
Part of NorthShore

swedishcovenant.org/COVID
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

EVELYN FIGUEROA
Professor of clinical family medicine
University of Illinois College of Medicine

In addition to her responsibilities as professor and program director of the UIC Family Medicine Residency Program, Dr. Evelyn Figueroa serves as the volunteer medical director of the Pacific Garden Mission, the Midwest’s largest homeless shelter. To mitigate the COVID-19 outbreak at the shelter, Figueroa created and directed a COVID isolation unit. Her work led to the screening of hundreds of patients at high risk for infection, and she oversaw care for more than 200 homeless people with COVID-19. By devising Chicago’s largest isolation unit for the homeless, Figueroa provided safe care to one of the most vulnerable populations in Chicago while preventing community spread and relieving the demand on nearby Stroger, Mercy and U of I hospitals. She self-isolated from her family for several weeks.

MEGAN TRESS
Clinical instructor, Department of Biobehavioral Nursing Science
UIC College of Nursing

Megan Tress founded a nonprofit, the Charger Squad, to equip hospital beds with cellphone chargers. Patients may have phones but no charger with them and be unable to keep in touch with family. Hearing a loved one’s voice helps the patient heal and motivates them to get well, Tress says. Charger Squad distributed chargers to more than 25 hospitals and was working with a distributor to design a device with three charger types on a single cord.

CARISSA TYO
Interim director of emergency department operations
University of Illinois Hospital

Before the pandemic, Dr. Carissa Tyo took over emergency department operations, adding to physician and educator responsibilities. Over the next three months, she restructured processes, erected additional rooms in a COVID tent and reassigned and trained providers into new roles. She provided daily updates to a team of 200. Tyo moved to a nearby hotel in order to be closer to the base of operations and missed time with her family as she self-isolated.

WEST SUBURBAN HOSPITAL

COVID + SUB-ACUTE REHABILITATION UNIT

The team created a safe environment for COVID-positive patients who needed rehab services after discharge from acute care. The therapists help patients regain lost function from their illness and from extended hospitalization. Establishing the sub-acute rehab unit enabled patients to be transitioned from acute status, which opened up beds and enabled admission of new patients. It was uplifting for the team to discharge the unit’s first patient to her home at the functional level she had when she arrived at the hospital. Dr. Meghan Bisping, director of rehabilitation services, says that physical therapists who were initially unsure of working with COVID-positive patients are now “slightly offended” if they aren’t assigned to the unit.

Notable programs
to honor any deserving colleague

CRAIN’S 2020 NOTABLE PRIVATE EQUITY ADVISORS & INVESTORS
NOMINATION DEADLINE: JULY 10
PUBLICATION DATE: AUGUST 17

Crain’s Notable Private Equity Advisers and Investors will profile accomplished private equity advisers and investors in the Chicago area with at least 10 years of experience who lead transformative growth and have proven to enhance portfolio companies.

CRAIN’S 2020 NOTABLE WOMEN IN LAW
NOMINATION DEADLINE: JULY 17
PUBLICATION DATE: SEPTEMBER 7

Crain’s Notable Women in Law feature will identify women who have a track record of setting legal precedents, winning big cases for their clients and mentoring the next wave of women in law – all while finding ways to give back to their communities.

CRAIN’S 2020 NOTABLE EXECUTIVES IN MARKETING
NOMINATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 7
PUBLICATION DATE: SEPTEMBER 28

Crain’s Notable Executives in Marketing will recognize some of the top brand marketers responsible for storytelling some of the most iconic brands in Chicago.

Nominate at ChicagoBusiness.com/NotableNoms