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RICHMOND COUNTY
MEDICAL SOCIETY

REPORT

President's Prospective

June 2021 Summer Edition

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Dear Colleagues,

I want to express my gratitude to each and every one of you for the opportunity to helm our collective efforts to serve our community this past year. Though my tenure as 214th President of the Richmond County Medical Society was marked by an unprecedented population level health crisis, I believe we all rose to the occasion to meet the needs of our community, our public health colleagues and our own ranks as physicians through the COVID19 pandemic. We met challenges head on and leveraged the potential to shift our focus of care even more to communities that are at-risk and most vulnerable through crises such as COVID19.

Even as New York emerged through uncertain times, with the guidance of state and local leaders, to a semblance of personal, community and economic stability, we all found ourselves in the midst of an undeniable "new normal". The path to a confident course of treatment for COVID19 has been fraught with uncertain messaging and hesitancy among community members and providers alike to abide by suggested protocols. There is still much work to do in this regard and our Richmond County Medical Society continues to be well-poised to facilitate such efforts.

We are the professionals our community looks to for answers—and yet we are ourselves most often left with speculation and reactionary measures. Even for us as physicians, the enduring coronavirus pandemic presented unforeseen challenges as we marshalled our resources to combat a pandemic of unprecedented scale in modern medicine. Although we are on the frontlines of pandemic care, we found ourselves lacking the infrastructure to gather data on our collective experience, views on opportunities and barriers and views on the adequacy of the governmental response, access to testing and medical supplies, and the appropriateness of evolving social distancing policies. Inconsistent availability of medical

supplies and equipment placed both us and our patients in precarious circumstances throughout this past year. Noting that the lack of information on our experiences with the coronavirus pandemic negates our public health capacity to design appropriate policy responses, I am happy that our shared RCMS gathering space, via our monthly virtual Fireside Chats, provided us the platform through which we could interrogate our thoughts and perceptions on these matters. These Fireside Chats will all be made available via the RCMS website and serve to carry our collective voice forward.

As I took on the mantle of the 214th President of the Richmond County Medical Society, I made a soberminded approach with the awareness of the task ahead. Sustaining the community service model that RCMS has championed for two hundred years since its inception was my greatest priority. I know how I have benefited from this community of colleagues and I have long witnessed the impacts we have made together throughout our larger community. In carrying this effort forward, my team and I felt that the best way to showcase the gains our colleagues were making, the challenges they were identifying and the needs they were communicating was through the virtual Fireside Chat model. As a result, we were able through this past year to harness the voices of physician leaders throughout our community and beyond to address perennially important issues like community-responsiveness, patient-centered care, industry/provider partnerships, trauma-informed treatment, team-based care and organizing toward recommending necessary policy shifts.

We, as physicians and health professionals committed to serving our community, affirmed our need to take similar paths of responsiveness and leadership throughout our community—not only with regard to testing and tracing and treatment relative to COVID19, but also an effective message of prevention and hope. We need to continue our efforts as a medical society to stay updated about emerging treatment protocols through global health partners, partner with regional leadership to support one another, especially throughout the tri-state area, and be sustainably responsive to the needs of our community members in social, emotional and mental health capacities.

The COVID19 pandemic led to a second pandemic of stress, anxiety and fear among patient populations that strained the provider-patient trust that we have all cultivated over years of practice.

Considering such shifts also brought us a group to considerations around patient trust across various treatment protocols, whether medical, behavioral or pharmaceutical. We engaged several industry partners in the research and development space to learn about and strategize the utilization of emerging interventions. It is incumbent on us as provider partners to validate the implementation of such interventions and

also to communicate the opportunities and challenges that emerge. We were able to connect with industry representatives and medical science liaisons who are eager to further partner with each of us toward this end.

Several Fireside Chats were developed to help guide conversations to develop and strengthen a trauma-informed, equitable, and compassionate lens to providing care not only in response to COVID19, but all of the health issues faced by members of our community. The leaders within our medical society continue to support each other and emerging professionals throughout our society in turning our challenges into growth, recognizing the opportunities amongst ongoing and profound difficulties, and re-affirming our practices to serve everyone, with greater justice and equity.

Education remains the key to differentiating the myths from the facts that persist in our community, especially with regard to COVID19 vaccine hesitancy. We recently partnered with the Office of the Staten Island Borough President and the NYC Health Department to determine how we as physicians can collectively work to reverse this trend and move our community toward herd immunity. This is one among several community health efforts that I championed as the President of RCMS, reinforcing our Society as the leading, unbiased community health resource. I am pleased to be able to deliver this set of resources and opportunities to our incoming leadership, whose plans to focus on community-responsive COVID19 care continue to prioritize this population level health issue.

Richmond County Medical Society's ongoing plan is to expand awareness through targeted social media campaigns and creating community partnerships to help individuals to be better partners with us in their care. The voices of our contributing physician members and industry colleagues will resonate throughout our community through upcoming content release and marketing—to channel our collective expertise through our ongoing campaign: Our Community, Our Health.

Please join me today to again commit yourselves to our vision in preparing for a brighter future where we increase our prevention and response initiatives to varying illness and bring physical and mental wellness initiatives into our community and set an example for all of New York State—by joining forces as physicians and partnering with our community to support RCMS in our continued vision for community-based care.

Cordially,

Radha Syed, MD
214th President
Richmond County Medical Society



Max's Esca Restaurant

Comitia Minora Meeting

June 8th, 2021