

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 1/17/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

***ONE AT ONE*** – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, January 18 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, continue pray for swift reduction in the spread of COVID and especially the Omicron variant. Ask God to limit and end this pandemic. Pray for support and protection for those who work in medical fields and as first responders as they deal with this virus.*

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*I saw this post and thought it was very eye-opening for what things are like for those who work in health care during the pandemic.*

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare (<https://www.facebook.com/TallahasseeMemorial/>)-August 29, 2021(<https://www.facebook.com/TallahasseeMemorial/photos/a.162195950486361/4479901345382445/>)

Numbers alone will never tell the full story of what's happening within our walls right now. This pandemic is devastating – for our patients, our colleagues, their families. Megan Dunaway, RN is an Assistant Nurse Manager in our Emergency Center – Northeast, working on the frontlines of this fight. Please take a moment to read her powerful perspective:

I'm posting this in honor of my staff in the ER who are working relentlessly, and seeing horrific outcomes, in honor of both of my daughters who are currently sick with COVID (doing ok, they are not experiencing what I have seen in other children in our ER fighting this), and in honor of all of my patients I have lost over these past few weeks – as this is laying heavy on my heart.

I hope you read it, I hope you share it, I hope you restrain from commenting negatively. Controversy is the last thing I want from this share. I simply hope you start supporting, stop fighting, and start thinking before coming to the ER, "is this an emergency?"

To my patients I have lost: I can only hope I brought you a little comfort in your final hours. I hope you believed me when I looked you in the eyes and said, "I've got you," when I knew damn well COVID is bigger than anything we have for you.

To all of the wives and husbands and children I separated at our ER doors as their loved one checked in: "I'm sorry, COVID patients cannot have a visitor." I'm so sorry I took away precious time and last moments away from you.

To my daughters: I'm sorry you have seen me red faced and tear stained every day when I get home and I have no way to explain to you, because you don't deserve to know the darkness. And now, watching you sick from this virus, I'm sorry I did not do a better job at protecting you.

To my staff, my family at TMH: You all are HEROES. Every single one of you. You are the light in my darkness and I will continue to show up every day with you, as you show up every day for me.

To the Tallahassee Community: Instead of googling and arguing about what may or may not be real, here are actual events, witnessed by this 1 tiny nurse, in this 1 tiny ER in this 1 tiny town. In the past 10 shifts, I have personally taken care of at MINIMUM 1 critical patient with COVID per shift, all to have died. Daily. From COVID. Unvaccinated. Young. No underlying illness. There are no beds in our hospital COVID units or ICUs (though daily we work tirelessly to make space). I am caring for these patients for hours/days in our ER, in addition to emergencies walking in. I get to know them in their darkest hour, their families, then finally, I get a bed for them at the hospital, I hug them goodbye. I have had to stop checking up on them the next day, because my heart cannot handle hearing one more time, that none of them made it. This is my reality. Which means this is YOUR reality. You live right here in Tallahassee with me. This is YOUR community. This is not google researched. These are not skewed facts. This is my actual account. Right here in Tallahassee. We, as a community, are in crisis.

Stop fighting over what is real or not. Stop fighting over whether you should get the vaccine or not. Stop fighting over whether to wear a mask or not. I can only share with you my experience. In the meantime, we, in the ER, will continue to have our doors open and care for you in your emergency as best we can. I just hope we can sustain and support your need.

PLEASE extend grace to our staff. We are working so hard, and we are tired. When you yell at us, when you treat us like we are not a human being, it is infuriating, as one of my major roles is to protect my staff. If you are not being seen quick enough to your expectation, please take comfort in the fact it means you will not be dying today. I cannot say that to the person I brought back in front of you. We are doing the best we can. We are bringing you back based on your acuity.

In addition, we cannot let your loved ones in and out of our doors out of protection for YOU AND for US. Extend some grace.

We are not a COVID-19 testing center. We are an emergency center. COVID patients are overflowing and let us not forget everyone else coming in with emergency needs NOT related to COVID. People are still having heart attacks and strokes. People are still getting cancer. People are still having non-COVID emergencies.

I have been a nurse for 18 years, most of it ICU and Emergency Nursing, so by the nature of the beast, I have seen some things I would wish on no one.

But this, by far, is the most horrific thing I have ever experienced.

Let's come together as a community and support each other.

May we get through this TOGETHER,

Megan

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey