

# A Moment to Pause

## ISSUE #3

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*Through this note, by offering a reflection on the remarkable spirit of the nearly 6,000 DPH and UCSF staff, scientists and clinicians contributing at ZSFG, we intend to highlight our collective efforts to becoming the best place to work.*

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### New Rituals

In H32, the medical ICU, I watched 8 clinicians turn a single patient. It took 40 minutes. That's 320 minutes of *total* person time, nearly five and a half hours. The nurses do this several times a day on each patient the team is "proning". When patients are on ventilators you are used to seeing them lying on their back. For patients with severe lung injury, like COVID, we learned some may improve if they lie on their stomach, face down. The prone position. While prone, gravity alters the shape of their lungs, creates fluid shifts, and redistributes air pressure within their chest. To prevent skin pressure sores, patients can be prone only for a few hours. Then they need to be turned over, on to their backs, face up. It was this turning of a prone patient I watched. The turning has a pattern, a rhythm. Because all of these patients have COVID, in the first step six nurses help each other put on their turning garments - protective robes, masks and face shields. A seventh person, the respiratory therapist, puts on a hood attached to a pump blowing air (a PAPR) to push away droplets or secretions as they stand over the ventilator tube passing through the patient's mouth. The eighth person, a nurse just outside the room, monitors six IV pumps sending medications through IV tubes 10 feet long, stretching from the hallway, across the room to the patient's body, a limbo bar for others to slide under. With three, robed nurse on either side and the respiratory therapist at the head of the bed, in quiet tones they planned each step of the turn. Once ready, they slipped their hands beneath the woman (a storeowner, an aunt), in unison they chant "One - two - three" then lift and turn this whole person on to her back - expertly, carefully and with great tenderness. It's a ritual of profound beauty. The act of lifting another with thoughtful intention and care.

During a time of the spring equinox, Passover, Easter, and the month of Ramadan, I have been reflecting on rituals. These activities steeped in heritage, borne of traditions, bring benefit to the collective. All cultures cultivate them. Rituals create a sense of belonging. Often they highlight a rite of passage for an individual or a community. Spiritually, they can open a door between the everyday and the extraordinary, even the sacred, like bending to lift another at a vulnerable moment. COVID forced us out of our routines. Work is different. Home is different. I invite you to consider what new

rituals are taking shape in your life. What are you co-creating with your work community that will bring an enduring benefit? As our families and friends shelter in place, what enriching activities or rhythms are taking shape in your life you hope to maintain as ongoing new rituals?

Jeff Critchfield, Aiyana Johnson, Margaret Damiano, Brandi Frazier, Shannon Smith

Follow-up: The LatinX father I wrote about in Issue #2 is off the ventilator, soon to be transferred out of the ICU.

## Resources

As the community sends love letters to all of you for your service, consider a new ritual. Join Shannon Weber, Director of PleasePrEPMe an HIV prevention organization, for 30 days of writing and receiving love letters. Write to cultivate healing, joy and gratitude. [Sign Up](#)



Sojourn Chaplaincy wants you to know they are available through a new warm line, check out their flyer below to learn more details.

# SPIRITUAL CARE WARM LINE

Phone Support Available  
Mornings and Evenings



During the month of April, the hospital's Sojourn Chaplains will be available by phone to provide spiritual and emotional support for anyone who needs it.

You can call the confidential Warm Line everyday between from **6am-11am** or **5pm-9pm**. Chaplains are able to provide support, words of inspiration, prayer, blessings, a brief meditation or to simply listen.



WHEN:

**The Entire Month of April 2020**

HOURS:

**Everyday  
6am-11am and 5pm-9pm**

PHONE:

**415-874-5317**

La línea es bilingüe en los noches  
de los martes, jueves y sábados.

Need support but don't have time for a call?

Try calling our Spiritual Care Re-centering Line  
at **\*68154**  
to hear a daily recording  
to help support you in re-centering.

If calling from a cell or off campus  
call **628-206-8154**



**We would love to hear from you.**

Please scan the QR code below to suggest a future topic for ***A Moment to Pause*** or to share a word or phrase to describe how you took a moment to pause. (Played with my kids, walked my dog, phone call with family, wrote 30 love letters . . .)

