



Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Dear Friends,

We hope that you and your families had an enjoyable and healthy holiday period despite all the challenges. While the situation continues to be uncertain, we are cautiously encouraged by the fact that the case rate in Israel is now appearing to be headed in the right direction.

Since the inception of the second wave, we have been averaging about 85 to 90 COVID-19 patients. While this is fewer than the number treated at the peak of the first upsurge (123 patients) and we are slowly beginning to see the positive effect of lockdown, the general condition of the patients in this wave is considerably more serious. On average, about twenty percent are on ventilators. At one time we even had five patients being treated on ECMO machines, which are reserved for the most critical of cases.

We are pleased to note that in this current wave, our overall inpatient activity is slightly reduced - our medical and surgical departments have remained fully functional, as opposed to in March/April when our inpatient activity was operating at around 70 percent. During this current lockdown our outpatient services have remained fully open.

Our focus now is on preparing for what may lie ahead in the coming weeks and months.

Just before Yom Kippur, we once again temporarily converted Internal Medicine C into a fully operational Corona Unit. In mid-November, this will be replaced by a brand-new department with 57 new bed stations dedicated to Corona care, in a completely renovated area that previously housed our staff cafeteria. This will result in a total of 100+ beds specifically allocated for COVID-19 patients, with the option for additional beds as needed. Internal Medicine C will re-open before the onset of the winter months, when it is heavily relied upon for treating seasonal illnesses such as the flu and other respiratory conditions.

We welcome the chance to stress that as challenging as this period continues to be, we can take pride that effective and efficient management and planning strategies have allowed Shaare Zedek to stand strong and ready in response to constantly changing needs.

On the forefront have been our dedicated staff. We know the enormous burden that the nature of this effort has placed on our medical and support teams and we again take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to them and their families. While the effort on a day to day basis is focused on medical care and the challenges this poses to our doctors and nurses, we pride ourselves on offering a very comprehensive approach to treatment that also prioritizes emotional and practical aspects of care. In this regard our dieticians,



physiotherapists and social workers among many others are integral players in the Corona treatment program. On any given day we are working to go above and beyond by marking birthdays and anniversaries in the ward, decorating the rooms for Sukkot and even bringing musical entertainment in the form of one of our guitar-playing doctors!

We are encouraged by the frequent visits bestowed upon Shaare Zedek by both senior government and Ministry of Health officials; without exception they all praise the efforts of the entire Shaare Zedek family.

A large factor of this trying period continues to be the financial stress the crisis has imposed on our hospital. We are incredibly thankful for the support of friends all around the world who continue to help us during these trying times.

We look forward to reporting on continued progress in the weeks and months ahead. Our prayer is that the coming period will be defined by only good health, both here in Israel and around the entire world.

With sincere wishes,

Ofer Merin, MD  
Director General

Jonathan Halevy, MD  
President



Photo courtesy of Nati Shochat, Flash 90