

STORY FROM THE FRONTLINES



As I am driving home, no cars on the road, I start to question the time of day. Realizing it is six o'clock on a Thursday, I start to wonder if I missed some big news. Daily "orders" by the government, daily pandemic task force conference, daily hospital pandemic response team updates, daily virtual meetings, daily webinars, daily PPE numbers, daily PUI numbers. These updates are now routine. I attempt to recall all the daily updates, but before my mind is done recollecting daily changes, my phone rings. It's a call, from the hospital, the results for the PUIs are not yet available. It has been five days and the results are still pending. My mind starts to count the number of PPE used while caring for this patient. I call my colleague with the update, who I've spoken to twelve times already about the frustrations we share. I decide to call the health department in an effort to expedite the results. The sweet lady who answers the phone provides me with a generic answer which I already expected. At this point, I am in the garage of my home, sitting in my car, speaking to an operator. There is no resolution in the delay of test results. I hang up and take a deep breath.

We have become accustomed to instant results and gratification. Being able to wait, patiently, is something we only read about. If we don't answer a text immediately, if we don't answer a call on a Saturday or an email at 8pm, we fear we might be viewed as "not caring" or unprofessional. This pandemic has affected our generation more than anyone could have imagined. The changes in our daily lives that will persist are monumental. We will not take for granted our didactic session. We will not take for granted our coffee meetings. We will not take for granted long staff meetings. We will not take for granted sitting next our patients and hearing their stories. We will not take for granted each smile we see. We are social creatures. Although traffic can really spoil one's mood, it is also a reassurance that we probably didn't miss any very BIG updates that day.

Thank you,

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