Pandemic 2020 --A Mother’s Revelation

My daughter is a social worker.  Committed to the mentally frail and vulnerable. She, in partnership with her team, voices the needs of the inpatient client. Unable to isolate and confine individuals for fear of psychological trauma, providers are taught to shield themselves throughout the day while working on an open unit. In the event of a sudden emergency requiring manpower to subdue, risks are taken to protect the individual from harm. Physical barriers are unintentionally broken. Our heroes are face-to-face with both the client and this mysterious virus.

My daughter is a physical therapist. How unnaturally quiet are the inpatient units apart from the pandemonium of the intensive care and emergency rooms. “No elective surgeries --cancel all appointments”. Critically ill Covid patients--one moment coughing with fever then struggling to breathe requiring life sustaining ventilation treatment, dialysis, ECMO, fluids, immunoglobulin, rescue medications. PT census is down and staff are temporarily deployed to assist in N95 fit-testing. Everyday is a new challenge. Covid patients are recovering and now in need of total body reconditioning. Cardiopulmonary function is poor and can rapidly deteriorate. It takes a minimum of 5 minutes to don on and another 5 minutes to don off. “My patient is requiring a high % of oxygen delivery via a non-rebreather and his Sp02 saturation drops when repositioning from supine to sitting. I fear the necessary high oxygen treatment he requires may also cause harm.  I need to explain to his family our expectations for exercise needs to be carefully planned to avoid deterioration in his health. It’s a longer recovery for these patients.”  My daughter is exhausted mentally and physically. No matter, she returns the very next day devoted to making every day count as we all standby waiting to hear the latest updates on this evolving historic pandemic.

My daughter is a high-risk obstetric patient. Fear of giving birth in uncertain times. Fear of being alone when informed that fathers must leave after recovery. Fear of being transferred to the ambulatory surgical unit via ambulance after delivery. Fear of Covid. Her own health requires close monitoring for risk of hemorrhage, thrombosis, and hormone insufficiency. Action is taken by the healthcare team. Schedules are rearranged to accommodate the patient and physician for a planned cesarean section.  Mother will remain in the hospital with her newborn. She tests negative for the virus.  So orchestrated is the healthcare team in providing care and comfort.  The miracle of birth supersedes all fears and hope prevails for a new beginning. Fear is conquered by the healing hands of our frontline healthcare providers. And fear is swept aside by a mother’s love to nurture her child and both get stronger everyday.

Headlines read “thank you to our frontline heroes”. And that we should be for it is the genuine dedication to a moral obligation and oath of service to heal and comfort that brings hope in these unprecedented times. It is the ordinary that has been extraordinary. Daily groundbreaking news flashes of the overwhelming suffering of the afflicted multitudes contrasted by the undaunting tireless efforts of those caretakers doing one’s best in the agonizing battle to minimize distress and heartbreak. Evolutionary medicine pioneering the unknown in global unison. Unrelenting and confident in fellowship that our community will overcome this torment and rise above as tenacious champions.

I am so very proud of my daughters. No longer children looking for a mother’s hand but women lending a hand to help another.