



HSS Transforms to Provide Leadership During the Community Response to COVID-19

A Report as of April 4, 2020

HSS began 2020 uniquely positioned to sustain and enhance our leadership position in a rapidly evolving healthcare market. We celebrated record-setting patient satisfaction scores, robust financial health, and the expansion of our delivery system footprint both physically and digitally. No one could have foreseen the challenges we were about to face.

Before the Pandemic

On February 26, thousands of HSS employees gathered to hear from CEO Lou Shapiro and Surgeon-in-Chief Bryan Kelly, MD, about the organization's success in 2019. The yearly gathering is an important part of the "Leadership By All" culture that has helped to keep HSS #1 in the US for orthopedics for 10 straight years. There was much to be proud of: 522,000 outpatient visits, 35,000 surgeries, and our vigorous financial health. Revenue topped \$1.8 billion with an endowment that grew to \$240 million thanks to the generosity of individuals and an exceptional run of the market. With increasing demand for our services, plans for new facilities across the tristate area had kicked into high gear—the River Building would be the centerpiece of a massive main campus transformation.

Planning was also underway for the launch of HSS Health, a digitally enabled care management platform. And the HSS Research Institute had taken off in exciting new directions, with more than \$83 million in multiyear grant support to fuel the work of our clinical and basic science labs studying new treatments and technologies. The future of HSS as a world center of excellence was brighter than ever.

An Unprecedented Global Health Crisis

The breadth and severity of this global health crisis is one that would not have been imaginable even five weeks ago at our employee town hall. No US city has been hit harder than New York, where it is projected to affect more than 140,000 within two weeks. At HSS, more than 200 employees are currently quarantined, and 52 have tested positive for COVID-19. In the face of this dire reality, HSS has acted swiftly and responsibly to allocate our resources to fight this battle.

A Swift, Decisive Response

HSS began monitoring the outbreak closely following the guidance from the CDC. HSS leadership made a firm commitment to communicate with employees frequently and transparently, through daily email and video updates, weekly livestreams, and a custom web app to provide real-time information and support to all staff 24/7.

As the crisis worsened, a multidisciplinary team of specialists from across the organization was formed to implement rapidly evolving safety procedures, including patient and visitor screening tools, and to educate staff on personal protective equipment (PPE) use.

Building on that collaborative problem-solving approach, in early March, the COVID-19 Leadership Team was formed to manage the constantly changing needs of HSS operations, with cross-functional, foundational, and executive leaders.

Meeting seven days a week to identify, triage, and address real-time needs across HSS, the team includes leaders from Communications, Emergency Management, Epidemiology, Executive, Finance, Government Affairs groups, Human Resources, Infection Prevention, Information Technology, Legal, Medical Staff, Nursing, Operational Excellence, Risk and Compliance, and Supply Chain.

Protecting Our Staff, Serving Our Community, and Saving Lives

When the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on Wednesday, March 11, HSS had already implemented the precautions and policies needed to protect our staff and patients, including restrictions on travel and transitions to virtual meetings with a focus

on social distancing. It soon became clear that we would need to take more significant steps to mitigate the spread of the virus and respond to the pressing needs of our city, our state, and our country.

“Because of our culture, ‘Leadership By All’ has been demonstrated by every member of the staff. We are one team, one HSS. I am so proud to be part of this organization.”

With thoughtful deliberation, on Sunday, March 15, leadership canceled all nonessential care effective Tuesday, March 17. Our definition for what we deemed essential musculoskeletal care set the standard for other institutions to follow. Over the course of one week, HSS transitioned from 100% utilization of physical and labor capacity to less than 20%.

In doing so, we were able to free up 80% of capacity to focus on providing essential musculoskeletal care to our patients in the safest environment possible while supporting the needs of our healthcare partners. We also further expanded our capacity to accept patients from the neighboring NewYork-Presbyterian (NYP) system, freeing up their resources so that they can allocate as many as possible to caring for COVID-positive patients.

“During this time of crisis, the talent and uniqueness of the HSS workforce really shine. Everyone has risen to the challenge, and this speaks to why HSS is special and leads in our field.”

In a matter of days, departments across the organization, from facilities and supply chain to direct patient care,

took decisive action to transform operations at HSS from the inside out.

To date, that transformation has included the following milestones:

- ▶ **Building an Orthopedic Triage Center** in 24 hours to help patients with acute orthopedic injuries or severe pain avoid going to emergency rooms and unnecessary risk of exposure
- ▶ **Consolidating our outpatient capacity** on the main campus for all essential musculoskeletal care, increasing capacity and resources
- ▶ **Scaling telehealth capabilities** so that patients can receive virtual care from more than 200 physicians, including providers at HSS Florida
- ▶ **Offering virtual outpatient physical therapy** and occupational therapy telehealth services
- ▶ **Opening Urgent Ortho Care facilities** across five regional locations (two in New York and one each in Long Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey) to provide an alternative to emergency rooms for urgent or essential musculoskeletal care
- ▶ **Transforming operating rooms and patient rooms** to prepare for increased support of critical care and ventilated patients
- ▶ **Establishing a dedicated leadership structure** to coordinate with NYP on patient transfers, capacity, and supplies

In a matter of hours, we converted HSS floors into general medical floors, and by Tuesday, March 31, had admitted more than 75 patients.

HSS COVID-19 Situation Room

An operations and information hub created at the HSS main campus in early March. Pictured (l to r): HSS President & CEO Lou Shapiro, Surgeon-in-Chief and Medical Director Dr. Bryan T. Kelly, and Senior VP/Patient Care and Chief Nursing Officer Jennifer O’Neill



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Recognizing the enormity of this crisis and its impact on the HSS community, as well as the unique burden the current situation places on our front-line clinicians, we quickly mobilized to devise new ways to assist HSS staff and their families. For our physicians, we established a Clinician Peer Support Program. For our employees, offerings include transportation, childcare, temporary housing, employee counseling, and other wellness offerings. Importantly, HSS has embedded a war-time trauma specialist in the hospital full-time to support the front-line staff each day. HSS has also established the COVID-19 Employee Assistance Fund to provide resources to staff suffering personal hardship due to the pandemic.

Teamwork in a Race Against Time

Truly exceptional demonstrations of teamwork have been constantly on display at HSS during this time of crisis. This has been most evident in our quest to source, secure, and refresh supplies of PPE for those on the front lines, here and at NYP.

Among the many heroes in this effort is our Supply Chain team, which is responsible for monitoring dozens of products including masks, gloves, gowns, eye shields, shoe covers, and other PPE that are in limited supply. The quantities of these products fluctuate by the hour. We are working tirelessly with manufacturers and distributors to continuously source and build our inventory. Meanwhile, assistance in locating and securing new sources of essential supplies has come from all areas of

the organization, as well as our alumni and partners in academia and business. The HSS Education Institute recently leveraged relationships in the US and China, including with Fosun Pharma, Nanjing University Drum Tower Hospital, and HSS alumni from major Chinese hospitals, including Peking University People's Hospital, to secure more than 63,000 donated pieces of protective equipment for HSS. When challenges arose in transporting those supplies from China to New York due to acute air cargo capacity shortages, our HSS Global Partnerships team stepped in, working closely with longtime partners at Johnson & Johnson in the US and in China to ensure the supplies shipped. The first delivery arrived on Sunday, March 29. These efforts are ongoing.

“To quickly and proactively respond to the needs of patients and our partners. To pivot from an orthopedic hospital to an advanced medical surgical hospital. It is astounding. There is no book for this; we are drawing from experience and saying this is how we will lead through these uncertain times.”

Since the virus hit the US, our friends and partners from around the globe have been asking us, “How can we help?” Every minute of every day we at HSS are asking that of each other and of our colleagues at NYP. On Friday, March 27, NYP had an immediate need for five lifesaving ventilators. HSS quickly mobilized a cross-



departmental effort to help, delivering the necessary equipment within lifesaving minutes.

Meanwhile, HSS nurses in particular have risen to the challenge, caring for the influx of non-orthopedic patients on our inpatient floors, including a new population of very ill acute patients with complex conditions. They are learning at the bedside in real time with experienced clinical leaders and educators standing beside them. As of Thursday, April 2, 40 staff have been deployed to NYP/Weill Cornell, including 33 nurses and 7 unit assistants/surgical techs. Ten nurses were assigned to NYP/Lower Manhattan, and two to NYP/Lawrence. In addition, nearly 1,000 HSS employees have raised their hands to volunteer at NYP.

In the final days of March, it became abundantly clear that the situation was going to get much worse before it would get better. On Monday, March 30, at 8 am, we made a game-time decision to evolve our surge plan to provide care for COVID-19 patients starting April 1. This choice is consistent with our principles of protecting our staff, our patients, the organization, and society.

In order to accommodate COVID-19 patients, we have transformed our 9th floor Operating Room Suite into a ventilator-capable critical care unit along with the 8th and 10th floors. We are accepting these patients via direct transfer from NYP, our Orthopedic Triage Center, and



direct orthopedic emergency admissions. We will continue to treat other patients on our remaining inpatient units as well as provide urgent and emergent orthopedic care. In the coming days, we will care for 200 patients, including more than 30 critically ill patients who require advanced life support.

Return to New Normal: Better and Stronger Together

This crisis is a defining moment for us all. Hourly change has become the new normal, but through it all, HSS continues to plan for the future. What we are learning as an organization is making us stronger. This experience is bolstering what was already an impressive foundation of teamwork, culture, decision-making, and leadership for today and tomorrow.

“Our true work is not our job, that is what we do, not what we were created to do. Our true work is to look after each other, to protect each other, and to be of benefit to one another.” —Bill Gates

We remain committed to upholding our mission: delivering the highest caliber of care, conducting leading-edge research, and educating the next generation of musculoskeletal leaders. The investments we’ve made in our care management enterprise during this crisis will allow us to continue to do what we do—and to do it even better. Our research enterprise will continue to redefine and shape the field of musculoskeletal health. Our expansion of the main campus will proceed with the construction of the River Building, a physical embodiment of our return to a new normal.

Right now, we are in the fight of our lives. We are fighting for our patients, our staff, our organization, and our city. We will win this fight, but we need your support. By making an investment in HSS, you will help New York get through this crisis and help HSS get to where we need to be—ready to serve you when you need us most.

With your partnership, we will return better and stronger, pioneering research and discoveries and getting people back to what they need and love to do better than anyplace else.

Now is the time for swift action. We need your support today.