



Jeffrey R. Balsler, M.D., Ph.D.
President and CEO, Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Dean, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Dear Vanderbilt Health Patient,

Your trust is important. Yes, there are uncertainties regarding coronavirus, but please know that we stand ready to care for you - now, and as the number of infected people in our region increases.

A major priority is to ensure all the places where patients come to VUMC are as safe as possible. For this, we have implemented social distancing practices in all patient care areas, including clinic, imaging, and surgery locations. We are paying attention to these details in all settings, from complex operating room environments to the location of chairs in waiting areas. And as a leading healthcare center, we continue to reinforce our meticulous cleaning and infection control practices.

VUMC plays a special role in Middle Tennessee, as we care for adults and children with virtually all known health conditions. We are the only capable resource in our region for many patients. Because of this, we are working diligently to continue treating and providing preventative care for a wide range of illnesses, while constantly monitoring our staffing and supplies.

To maximize your safety and that of our healthcare staff, we are working to assure all VUMC clinicians have the capability to perform telehealth visits through *My Health at Vanderbilt*. In cases where a telehealth visit cannot be arranged, if you and your clinician agree that the timing of a visit is flexible, we will adjust your appointment accordingly. The approach we are taking is prudent and supported by the American Association for Medical Colleges.

Over the past weeks, we have instituted steps to help ensure you have the most up-to-date information and can seek assistance if needed. A dedicated hotline is available to conduct phone screening for those who think they may be exhibiting symptoms associated with the coronavirus-fever, cough and shortness of breath-at **888-312-0847**.

We have also established a website, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information for Employees and Patients](#), which is constantly updated with helpful content. The site includes valuable information about our dedicated

[COVID-19 assessment sites](#). These are the places to go if you have coronavirus symptoms and wish to be screened, or if your clinician recommends screening.

For weeks we have been closely tracking events around the globe and preparing. In addition to the extensive preparedness efforts for our hospitals and clinics in the region, we have many people working on the frontlines of the national and global response. Our teams are testing antiviral treatments, developing preventative therapies, and implementing real-time systems to analyze the trends that underlie the pandemic. They have dedicated their careers to understanding pandemic threats and are working day and night to develop the solutions we all need.

Despite the many challenges coronavirus presents, the people of VUMC are working around the clock to ensure you, our patients, continue to receive the highest-quality, personalized care for your health needs. Thank you for sending us so many kind messages of support. Together - we are making a difference when you need us most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Balsler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Balsler, MD, PhD
President and CEO, Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Dean, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine