

Caregivers at INTEGRIS Canadian Valley Hospital Share Their Experiences with COVID-19

One thing we've learned from COVID-19 is that no one is immune. The community of Yukon is proof of that. INTEGRIS Canadian Valley Hospital is caring for several coronavirus patients, some of whom are critically ill.

"These patients are sicker than your average patient. This is definitely not the flu. Our COVID patients are sick for a long time. They are not recovering quickly from this," Elise Kuykendall, D.O., is on the frontlines of the pandemic. She says what happens to the body is called the cytokine storm.

"This is when there is a severe immune reaction in which the body releases too many cytokines into the blood too quickly. Cytokines play an important role in the normal immune response but having a large amount of them released all at once can be harmful," she explains. "Sometimes it

can even be life threatening and lead to multiple organ failure."

Mary Lou White is a nurse in the COVID Unit at Canadian Valley. She says this illness can be extreme. "Once a patient is intubated, from my experience, they can deteriorate quickly – sometimes within 24 hours." She adds, "They struggle for air. They never seem to be able to catch their breath."

Caitlin Coppock is a respiratory therapist at the hospital. She knows her particular skill set is necessary to defeat this virus.

"I don't think a lot of people understand what "flatten the curve" really means. Flattening the curve does not mean we will eliminate the disease completely, it just buys us more time to properly prepare for what could be coming."

She continues, "We may need



more equipment, like ventilators, to handle the potential surge. But you need more than just the machines. You have to have individuals who are specifically trained to use those machines. It takes years of experience to truly understand how to critically care for these patients."

Coppock worries more about a staffing shortage in her specialty than she does about having the proper personal protective equipment (PPE).

"I feel we are well informed and well supplied. I'm not scared. It is a little unsettling to deal with something you haven't seen before, but I am confident in our procedures."

One thing all of these caregivers say is they wish there was a way for the public to see just how sick COVID-19 can make certain members of our community. They say once you've seen that, you can't forget it. And once you realize this could happen to your neighbor or your loved one, a person is much more apt to take the shelter in place guidelines far more seriously.

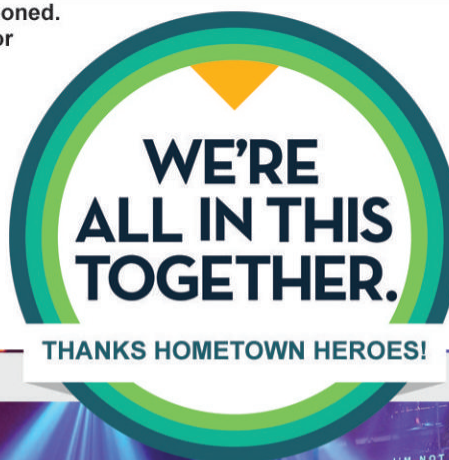


Hillary Sanchez

Hillary Sanchez enjoys a yummy bite to eat from the amazing volunteers at INTEGRIS hospital.

All on campus activities have been postponed.
Join us Sunday at 8, 9:30, or 11AM for
Facebook Live or Church Online.

**See You
ONLINE**



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