Twitter Thread by Cam Patterson



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UAMS has taken the extraordinary step of asking leadership across our health system to refrain from traveling over the coming holidays and report to work or be available if needed. Other hospitals in our state are considering similar measures.

(1)

Although the health care system in the state of Arkansas is stressed right now, it is holding up, and additional surge capacity exists. But that capacity is not infinite. Every day, we become more and more concerned about our ability to manage what lies ahead.

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As health professionals, we are doing all we can. However, one thing is certain. We can't meet this challenge unless you are with us. As Secretary Jose Romero of the AR Dept. of Health has said, we are in the midst of a "surge within a surge" in this COVID-19 pandemic.

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Right now, the @UAMS_COPH COVID-19 forecasts, which have been strikingly accurate so far, indicate that the density of COVID-19 infections exceeds each of our abilities—yours & mine -- to avoid contact with actively infected individuals in our state...

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...whenever we venture outside our homes. They predict an exponential increase in coronavirus deaths in the next two weeks, more than we saw in the first four months of the pandemic. We may soon exceed the number of beds, ventilators, & most importantly...

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...health care providers required to care for those who are acutely ill in our state, whether they are victims of COVID-19 or critical illnesses like diabetes and heart disease that existed before COVID-19 affected our communities.

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We are at a crossroads, working hard to stretch our resources to keep patients alive while at the same time discussing possible locations for a temporary morgue when ours is full, as it was this past weekend.

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50 years ago, Richard Manuel of the Band sang these lyrics: “Save your neck/or save your brother/Looks like it’s one or the other.” That is not a choice we need to make right now. If we all get super serious about the basic principles of masking, social distancing...

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...& avoiding exposure to individuals outside our nuclear families, we can help to protect ourselves and our brothers and sisters. Maybe there is still a chance to avert the worst aspects of the calamity that we see looming in front of us.

(9)

Your behavior, individually & collectively, will still make a difference. Exercise your right to be a good citizen in what will otherwise be the darkest winter in our lifetimes.

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Because if our trajectory in Arkansas does not change, family funerals may take the place of family celebrations this holiday season. Let’s do everything we can together as Arkansans not to let that happen.

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On behalf of UAMS & our health care colleagues across the state, I encourage you to plan right now: Enjoy a nuclear family holiday, avoid travel and interactions with those who don’t live in your house...

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...pray that this is the last time we have to celebrate our deeply meaningful holidays in such drastic circumstances.

(End)