A PANDEMIC RETROSPECTIVE: HOW WE SERVED, LEARNED, AND IMPROVED

If there’s any silver lining to two years of a pandemic, it’s this: Pittsburgh Mercy has changed for the better, getting creative during unprecedented times and implementing best practices to better serve the community. Here are a few of our lessons learned.

Outdoor rounding led to improved colleague support
Regular visits to our 100-plus sites let leaders listen and learn from both colleagues and persons served. When COVID hit, ‘rounding’ came to a halt. To continue those important conversations, we resumed rounding via outdoor porch visits, which also allowed President & CEO Tony Beltran, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jack Todd Wahrenberger, or Mission Director Bill Connolly to administer onsite COVID tests, answer questions, address staff shortages, and discuss safety protocols. **The result:** adjusted overtime rules and compensation for those working extra shifts in residential programs and at the Winter Shelter.

Fast-tracking thoughtful decisions
Like many organizations, Pittsburgh Mercy was not particularly adept at quick decision-making. The pandemic forced us to improve, mobilizing the leadership team to adapt to changing COVID protocols while continuing our programs and protecting the community. Weekly leadership team meetings expanded to include new team leaders and emphasized working through processes together. “We learned to make decisions faster and pivot when needed,” Beltran said.

Balancing remote vs. in-person
When COVID restrictions made in-person meetings untenable, we used Zoom, Teams, WebEx meetings, and videoconferencing to connect. It took some scrambling at first, but then operations continued in the “new normal.” An extra plus: colleagues saved on travel time by meeting remotely. We’re now looking to balance the efficiency of remote work with the advantages of in-person connections.

Key takeaways:
1. **Our array of programs and services is an asset.** An example: Our pharmacy and family health center provided the leverage to acquire vaccines and get “shots in arms” faster than many other providers.
2. **Adaptable staff are essential.** Our staff were true heroes, providing hands wherever needed and critical flexibility to adapt to changing conditions. Pharmacists became vaccinators, faith community nurses worked as vaccine clinic support staff, and behavioral health colleagues served in the Winter Shelter. Colleagues from many areas picked up shifts in residential services, and contact tracers provided onsite testing and vaccinations.

3. **Stay true to our mission.** We reached out with vaccinations to many providers, from homeless shelters to The Children’s Institute; faith communities with vulnerable congregations; and at-risk individuals like the homebound. “It helped us again to say who we are and who we serve,” Beltran said.

**WHAT DIDN’T CHANGE**
As always, donor support is critical and even more so during a pandemic, allowing us to continue serving the community’s most vulnerable members. A huge **THANK YOU** for your unwavering commitment! To make a future gift, go to [Pittsburgh Mercy](https://www.pittsburghmercy.org) or call 412-697-0730.

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**May is Mental Health Month!**

We invite you to join us for *Mental Health in the Workplace* -- a free panel discussion with Pittsburgh Mercy’s panel of experts:

- President and CEO, Tony Beltran
- Chief Medical Officer, Jack Todd Wahrenberger, Md., MPH
- Vice President, Behavioral Health Services Melissa Nossal, PsyD.
- Psychiatrist, Holly Stewart, Md.

**Register today** [Click here to register](https://www.pittsburghmercy.org)

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