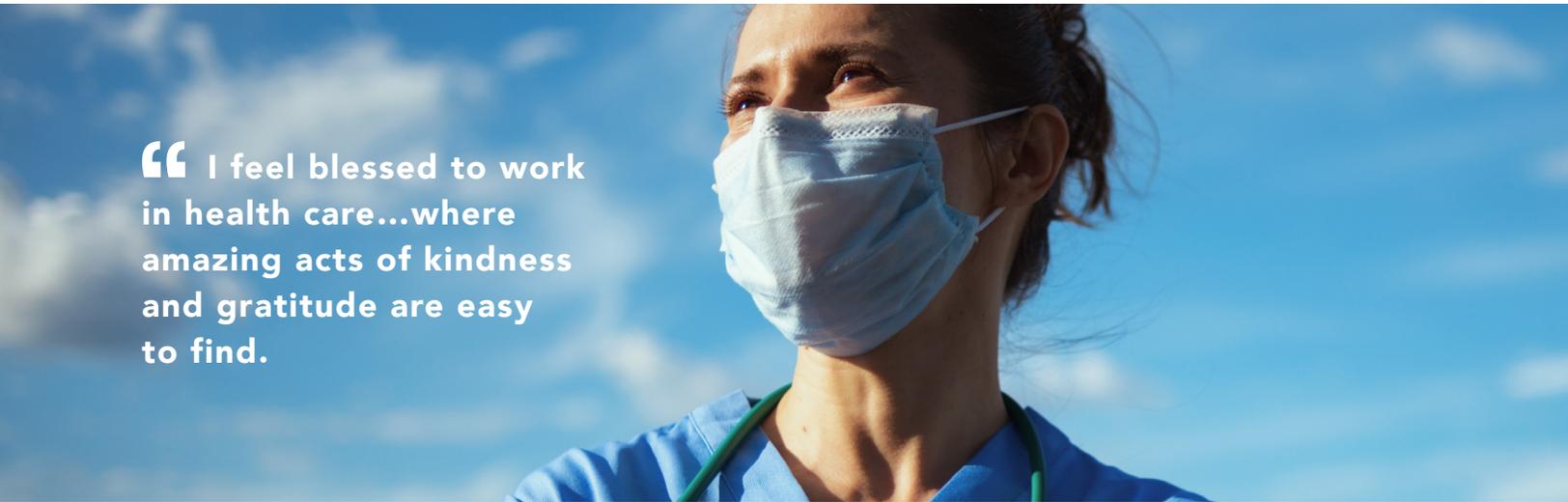


## Gratitude 2020



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We all have our own highs and lows of 2020. I have lost someone dear to me. I have had days where I have felt alone, and I have been anxious. This year, I have spent more days and nights isolated (outside of Zoom) than in my entire life. I have missed being with my friends, family, colleagues, clients, and well, everyone. My heart has also been broken to see the impact the pandemic has had on others financially, mentally and emotionally. I, too, have seen the nation tested politically and racially—nothing I would include in an annual holiday letter—yet I remain grateful. While I am not blind to the dark clouds, I do still see a lot of beauty.

I feel blessed to work in health care, an industry that I have served and supported for more than 25 years, where amazing acts of kindness and gratitude are easy to find. I am grateful for our physicians and clinicians. They entered this year already understaffed, yet they have done everything imaginable to not only care for the physical needs of their patients but also to address the emotional, spiritual and mental needs of their patients. Health care workers have graciously served not only to be the clinicians but to also fill in as patients' spouses, best friends or parents when visitors were not allowed. They have been innovative and creative in finding ways to connect with and for their patients: using their own phones and tablets to connect with family members, writing messages on windows when cards were not allowed and hanging photos of the health care team's faces in patient rooms to better connect patient to provider. These small acts have meant a lot to the patients and to their families.

I also am grateful for the health care workers who have adopted telehealth and other technology. These tools are not only meeting the immediate COVID-19 needs, but they have also allowed health care organizations to reach the underserved populations more efficiently and successfully. It has begun to remove geographic barriers for services, transportation limitations, and has actually been shown to strengthen the patient-physician relationship. Looking forward this will allow patients more access to services. From someone who loves the collaborative work being done across communities to solve health disparities, this is exciting.

I am also grateful for and inspired by all the philanthropists, donors, advocates and volunteers who have responded to show their own gratitude. Church groups providing hot meals, random strangers standing on the streets cheering for workers at shift changes, entire families sharing beautiful messages of gratitude through cards, e-mails, letters and social media platforms, monetary gifts ranging from a few dollars to millions are just some examples. All of these efforts have been to support each other and the community and to let others know that someone else appreciates them.



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### ARE YOU FEELING GRATEFUL TOO?

The gesture of doing something for others is proven to be a source of happiness for the giver and the receiver. Giving gives us purpose and helps us to focus on the good in others and in us.

Are you feeling grateful too? What can you do to express that gratitude? Whether it's writing a letter of appreciation or sending a card, volunteering or offering a service, or providing a financial or in-kind gift, be authentic—and unlock what makes you feel good while benefiting others. Everyone should feel good about giving and expressing gratitude.

How do you choose recipients of this gratitude? Identify what inspires you. There are more than 1.6 million nonprofits in the United States, each with a unique mission, service area and focus. Who you want to help, the young or the old? Is it a matter of geography? What needs do you want to address—poverty, education, health care, breast cancer? The goal is to find the organization that aligns with your interests, goals and even passions.

It's important to align what you want to give with the needs and capacity of the organization in order to achieve the impact you desire. Every organization prioritizes financial gifts. It's a great place to start. However, if you are seeking other methods to express gratitude, ask what the organization needs. Look on their website or connect with the foundation executives of the organization. Working with many nonprofits, I have seen well-intentioned gifts that were never used. Many organizations may not have the staff or infrastructure to store or distribute in-kind gestures. Safety protocols have limited or altered the ability to volunteer, deliver cards and share food donations. Thus, many well-intentioned gifts never make it to the recipient. Your investment is too valuable to waste.

### MULTIPLY YOUR GRATITUDE.

Make your gift in honor of someone—your physician who treated you, the nurse who comforted you, an entire unit or team of health care providers. The sentiment and acknowledgment will go a long way. And share “the why” of your gift with the organization. Share the reasons you are so motivated to express your gratitude. Not only will your primary gift of cash, items or services be appreciated, but also sharing your reason adds meaning and often serves as a gift itself. And a bonus: we know that expressions of gratitude not only provide happiness to the recipient but also to the giver as well.

Gratitude is contiguous. It is contagious. This is an ideal time of year to share your appreciation for organizations and people you want to honor. Good news and good deeds prompt more good deeds.

I am grateful for seeing expressions of gratitude lift others up in a year that no one expected. I am grateful for the resilience of our country and for the love we see in our neighbors coming together for others. I am grateful for those who selflessly serve on the frontline. Yes, I am truly thankful and grateful for the silver linings. I acknowledge that there is a lot of grey, but there are also plenty of silver linings if we look for them.

Now more than ever we need to explore and express our gratitude. And the more we focus on the good deeds, the more we will help others do the same. This is the season of thankfulness and gratitude. Let's end this unprecedented year kinder, stronger and more grateful.

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