



Sunday, March 15, 2020

Dear Friends,

In response to your concern as to the situation at Shaare Zedek, we share with you the following important update.

The COVID-19 threat the world faces today is obviously unlike one we have ever faced before.

We provide this update with the full understanding that that this crisis is affecting each one of you as well and that this is a global threat.

We begin with our sincerest wishes for health for you and your families.

While Israel has fought – and continues to fight – for our physical survival, this has always been a battle where we knew our enemy and knew what was necessary to win the war.

This current crisis is one where even the most informed epidemiologists and healthcare professionals are uncertain as to what may lie ahead. Yet we know it will require every possible resource to overcome. Israel's leadership has made extremely courageous yet prudent steps to best ensure we succeed, yet every indication is that we are wholly unable to guarantee what the future will bring.

Like so many other leading hospitals around the world, in recent days Shaare Zedek has been thrust into the forefront of this battle and every arm of the hospital is being marshalled to address the growing threat.

**This requires enormous resources – both physical and financial. As in times of past crises, we know our international friends have been there for the people of Jerusalem. We need you once again.**

At the time of this writing, there are 14 patients being treated at Shaare Zedek who have tested



Isolation Facility



Tele-Nursing

positive for the virus. To provide them with care in a way that protects them, our staff, and the general population, an area totally



separate from the main building has been allocated. The facility operates on an independent ventilation system so that the affected patients are completely isolated from all other patients and treatment areas. Advanced monitoring and communication systems limit contact between our staff and the patients. Medical teams enter only with necessary protection.

**Treating the Jerusalem community that is home to a large percentage of the demographic most vulnerable to this virus - the elderly - we have no doubt that in the near future the numbers will rise.**

This is a situation for which Shaare Zedek has trained and drilled for many years. While we ARE fully prepared to respond, there is no disputing that operating under these very real conditions imposes many challenges. Our dedicated doctors and nurses are of course vulnerable to the effects of the virus. Even while we go about our work, there is a constant concern for what is happening to colleagues around the world. There is also a very practical challenge that a significant number of our hospital staff have been forced into isolation.



As noted, while we will never waiver in our readiness to respond to every possible need, this crisis has already presented very real costs, stretching budgets that had been allocated for other urgent needs. Recognizing that the hour will likely come very shortly when we need additional intensive care stations, our management and medical engineering teams are working to make available as many ventilators and monitors as possible. We are in constant contact with suppliers to move up urgent equipment deliveries.

From our relationship over many years, we know that you have a special place in your hearts for the people of Jerusalem and Israel.

Never before has the concept of 'One Nation with One Heart' been truer than it is today.

With the sincere hope that this crisis ends quickly, we humbly offer our deepest thanks.

Best wishes for good health to you, your families and all of our communities,

Ofer Merin, MD  
Director General

Jonathan Halevy, MD  
President