



June 25, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

After 16 months of operating under an Incident Command Structure (ICS), the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) will be transitioning out of its COVID-19 Unified ICS.

In the early days of our response, we told you that we hoped this pandemic would unite us, figuratively if not literally, and show what we can accomplish by working together. We truly believed that at the time but still could not have imagined all the ways you would show up for our patients, students, community, and each other.

While this pandemic has brought its share of pain, fear, and frustration, there is no question that it also has brought us closer together.

Overnight, we saw individuals from various departments and across different locations coordinating to come up with solutions to what felt like solution-less problems. Under the leadership of ICS, we developed and implemented many policies — some of which will remain a part of our day-to-day lives, and others that may eventually be archived to use as a template should we need them in the future.

We put structures in place to ensure that we are able to respond to unpredictable situations. They are designed to be temporary systems that can be phased in or out based on need. Our first system-wide ICS effort has given us a blueprint for how to respond to a crisis. And, just as importantly, it has given us several best practices that we plan to incorporate into everyday operations.

This pandemic is not over, and neither is our work. In fact, we may find that we'll need to re-establish ICS if conditions worsen in the fall, and we are prepared for that. But today, this transition is a reflection of the immense planning and preparation we have put in place and signifies a sense of hope, that better days are here.

We want to thank all of the team members who served on ICS directly, as well as each team member who provided feedback, helped us think outside the box and find new solutions to problems we had never encountered, and those who led by example in adopting ever-evolving policies and guidance. A special thank you to David Marcozzi, MD, MHS-CL, FACEP, professor and associate chair of population health, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine, and UMMS COVID-19 incident commander, for his leadership of this group.

They say in times of crisis, it's not what happens to you but how you react that matters. We will forever be proud of the way this community reacted to this pandemic and grateful to each of you for the roles you have played.

Thank you,

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS

President

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