

The Challenges of Being a New Chair (During a Pandemic)

Kelly McQueen, MD, MPH, FASA
Ralph M Waters Distinguished Chair in Anesthesiology
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

1

Disclosures

- None

2

Objectives

- Briefly present the UW-Madison COVID experience
- Describe the challenges of new leadership on leading in uncertain times
- Review strategies for managing uncertainty and fear
- Communicate the impact of this crisis on the department, faculty, staff and learners
- Discuss Lessons learned and future planning

3

Arriving as a New Chair



- Oct 1, 2019
- My leadership background was primarily Global Health
- Exposure to Crisis Management in Low-Income Countries
- Pre-existing Culture and Trust Challenges

4

Advice and Strategy

- Dean's Advice
 - "Just heal the Department"
 - Culture Change
- Guidance from many of you
- Initial Strategy
 - Listen and Learn
 - Seek to Understand



5

90 Days – Jan 1, 2020

Areas of Focus – Potential Change

- Critical Care
- Significant Silos – Inflexible Workflows
- Staffing Model
- Workforce
- Lack of trust – of the institution and of leadership
- Equity and Transparency Challenges

Departmental Strengths

- Good Leadership Team
- Good Collaboration with other Departments
- Strong Clinical Identity
- Can do attitude
- Good residency team

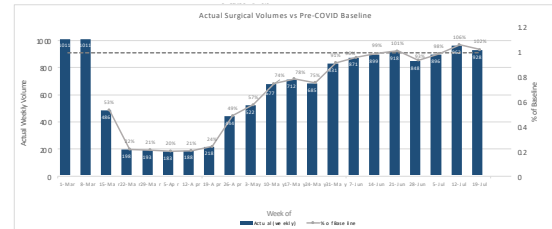
6

March 1, 2020 – UW Health COVID Planning Begins

- March 15, 2020 – Elective Surgery Reduction Begins
 - March 22, 2020 – Surgical Volume reduced to ~ 20% of baseline
 - April 26, 2020 – Surgical Recovery begins
 - June 14, 2020 – Surgical Operations at or above normal
- PPE analysis
 - Surge Planning
 - Critical Care Collaborative Planning
 - Anesthesiology
 - Emergency Medicine
 - Internal Medicine
 - Surgery

7

Actual Surgical Volumes vs Pre-COVID Baseline Volumes



8

COVID With Flex	Time Unit 1		Time Unit 2		Time Unit 3		Time Unit 4	
	Assignment AM	Assignment PM	Assignment AM	Assignment PM	Assignment AM	Assignment PM	Assignment AM	Assignment PM
	F3 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F3 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F3 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F3 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0
	F3 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F3 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F3 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F3 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2
ICU Level 1	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3
AFCH Bench	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3
UH Bench	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3
Airway 1	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0
FLEX 1	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0
Airway 2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2
FLEX 2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2	F1 CA2 R2
Airway 3	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0
FLEX 3	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0
Airway 4	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0
FLEX 4	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0	F1 CA2 R0
LINE 1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1
LINE 2	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1	F1 R1

9

Our Crisis Experience

- No Surge
 - Limited Productivity
 - Time management
 - Loss of Purpose
- Moderate Financial Crisis
 - Faculty and staff asked to take a payout – 15% in April, May and June (4% annualized)
- Fear
 - Anger and Frustration
 - Lack of PPE
- *Crisis brings out the best and worst in people – and we were no exception*
- Loss of Faculty
 - Immediate Retirement of 3 Faculty, eventual retirement of 7
 - 1 loss to fear of COVID, inspite of accommodation
 - Loss of 4 Critical Care Providers – change in focus

10

Our COVID Strategy: Managing Uncertainty, Providing Support

- Departmental**
 - Regular Communication
 - Weekly email
 - Regular Town Halls
 - Education and Training
 - COVID relevant Grand Rounds
 - PPE (PAPR) training and simulation
 - Provider Support
 - Institutional Crisis Support
 - Food
- Chair Strategy**
 - Regular Communication
 - Transparency
 - Vulnerable Sharing
 - My personal strategies
 - My own fears
 - Advocacy for Departmental Needs
 - PPE – esp PAPR
 - Processes -

11

Recovery Strategy

- Volume and Financial Recovery**
 - Improved OR utilization
 - Changed Faculty:Provider Staffing Ratios
 - Considered longer days and weekend options
 - Introduced Flexible Workflows

Never miss a good crisis



12

