Ontario Medical Association Physician Health Program is pleased to collaborate with Dr. Jillian Horton on this project. Conveying physician experiences and narratives during the COVID19 pandemic serves to document experiences and share powerful narratives for a profession at a time when full focus is on doing the job, taking care of patients and each other.

If you are a physician, resident or medical student in Ontario and you would like support please call or email confidentially 1-800-851-6606

mailto:php@oma.org © Ontario Medical Association
My name is Sohail Gandhi.

I graduated from medical school at the University of Toronto in 1990.

I'd never even left Toronto for more than a weekend when I did a community rotation in Parry Sound. I fell in love with the challenges and scope of rural practice and I ended up in Stayner. That was 28 years ago. I love the community and the people.

"At this point in my career, I work in a medical office with four other doctors. I go to the hospital in the mornings to round, then head to my office. Like everyone, I've been watching this situation unfold since January -- as the numbers started to rise we all started to realize this was something different.

"I've been caring for the same people for 28 years. I know their partners, kids, parents. Last week I had to start providing much more virtual visits by phone, email or video link. It was hard."
"I WORKED IN OUR NEW AFTER-HOURS CLINIC THE OTHER DAY—IT WAS STRANGE. NO PATIENTS IN THE WAITING ROOM. THEY ALL WAIT IN THEIR CARS, WAIT FOR ME TO CALL BACK. DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO DELIVER CARE VIRTUALLY WITHOUT THEM COMING IN. IT'S NOT EASY—THERE ISN'T THE SAME LEVEL OF TRUST THAT I HAVE WITH MY OWN PATIENTS. BUT I TRY.

"IT IS NOT THE SAME AS BEING FACE TO FACE WITH PEOPLE. NOT ONLY FOR DIAGNOSIS AND CARE BUT FOR WHAT IT GIVES BACK TO US. YOUNGER DOCS WOULD PROBABLY APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW A VERY SEASONED CLINICIAN CAN FIND VIRTUAL CARE FOR PATIENTS PRETTY JARRING—GUESS THERE WILL BE A LEARNING CURVE FOR EVERYBODY.

"BUT AMIDST THAT DISCOMFORT, I'VE BEEN REMINDING MYSELF OF WHAT I CAN DO. I CAN STILL TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE I KNOW. THOSE RELATIONSHIPS KEEP ME GOING, TOO."
“Driving through Collingwood—It’s the second week of March break—Restaurants should be bustling, full of people. I keep thinking about the impact on my patients—so many rely on tourism. I’ll always have my job as a doctor, but sometimes I wonder how I’m going to keep my clinic afloat.

Doc, I have 100 N95s for you. Where can I drop them off?”

Thank you so much, Mike, that’s incredible; please bring them to the hospital!

“I had to see a patient at the retirement home the other day..."

Is my grandson coming for a visit today?

No, we can’t have any visitors right now.

“The look on her face—it would break your heart.”

“Everyone right now is losing things that might seem trivial but those things are so important to them. It’s okay to mourn those things. It’s actually very important, and then we know what we’re missing and we see what we can find as a substitute in the interim.”
"I’VE LIVED THROUGH SARS, HIV, EVEN THE EARLIEST DAYS OF AIDS. THIS IS DIFFERENT IN SCALE BUT WE’VE ALWAYS GOTTEN THROUGH IT BEFORE, AND WE HAVE TO REMEMBER WE’LL GET THROUGH THIS TOO.

"ROMEO DALLAIRE SENT US A MESSAGE THE OTHER DAY AS HEALTH CARE WORKERS: “WE ARE THE FRONT LINES OF OUR BATTLE. YOU’RE GOING TO HAVE TO COUNT ON YOUR PROFESSIONAL INSTINCT——THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE BEST YOU COULD DO HAS BEEN DONE…”

"…AND ULTIMATELY AS A SOCIETY WE WILL GROW WITH THIS AND THE EXPERIENCE WILL PROVIDE US THE MATURITY TO FACE WHATEVER OTHER POTENTIAL THREAT COMES DOWN THE ROAD.”

"I FOUND SO MUCH COMFORT IN HIS WORDS.

"THAT WE ARE REPORTING FOR DUTY.

"BUT MOSTLY, THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE.”

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