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Mayo Clinic Strategies for COVID-19: Introduction

Elie F. Berbari, MD; Amy W. Williams, MD; Mary J. Williamson, MBA; Natalie A. Caine, MHA, FACHE; Karl A. Nath, MBChS; and Gianrico Farrugia, MD

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. As of May 28, 2020, there were nearly 1.7 million confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States and more than 100,000 deaths.1 This unprecedented worldwide crisis has created numerous challenges for existing health care systems, but it has also spurred innovation. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayo Clinic had embarked on its strategic vision leading to 2030, named Bold. Forward., which encompasses strategies to cure, connect, and transform health care. Early alignment with these 3 strategies has allowed Mayo Clinic to be more effective in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In January 2020, Mayo Clinic activated its Hospital Incident Command System across all locations in anticipation of a substantial surge in COVID-19 cases. Between February and May of 2020, task forces and initiatives were created and implemented to guide, prepare, and support the institution during this unprecedented crisis.

In this special series of articles, we describe 21 of the various Mayo Clinic initiatives and responses to COVID-19 (Table). One article describes the necessary elements of an effective hospital command center and the system-wide response to the pandemic. Another describes changes in local and federal regulations that served as catalysts for Mayo Clinic to provide home monitoring of patients with COVID-19 and to substantially increase telemedicine options for virtual visits. The use of enhanced prediction analytics and artificial intelligence has helped define our response and guide resource utilization and prioritization. Those tactics are described along with other prevention strategies, including requirements for personal protective equipment. It also became increasingly apparent in the preparedness phase that we needed proper diagnostic stewardship for testing utilization as well as testing strategies to improve prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Our practice now uses artificial intelligence and smart tools for contact tracing of exposed health care workers. Mayo Clinic has also established a virtual medical team and other services to support patients with COVID-19. New workflows and safety pathways have been created in many clinical areas, especially in the emergency department, intensive care units, outpatient practices, and surgical and procedural practices. These new teams and workflows are described in the articles.

Task forces were formed and programs organized to engage divisions and department chairs as needs became evident. Research studies were designed to address gaps in our knowledge of and therapies for COVID-19, ranging from studies in the basic sciences to several large clinical trials. During the crisis, Mayo Clinic halted all elective and semielective procedures, which resulted in a backlog of patients without COVID-19 who need care. In these articles, strategies are shared that allowed Mayo Clinic to safely reactivate its large, integrated multispecialty practice (both the inpatient and outpatient services) during this “new normal” state. Novel educational interventions, including various types of...
virtual interactions, were quickly implemented to ensure that we continued to deliver high-quality educational experiences for our graduate students, residents, and fellows when their in-person clinical rotations were temporarily suspended. The articles also highlight how Mayo Clinic is reaching out to our neighboring communities during this pandemic. Importantly, we will discuss major lessons learned thus far around rapid change management strategies, effective communication, acceleration of research protocols, and innovation during the COVID-19 crisis.

We hope that this series of articles will be useful to you and to your organizations during this and any future pandemic or other extremely challenging health care situations.

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Correspondence: Address to Elie F. Berbari, MD, Division of Infectious Diseases, Mayo Clinic, 200 First St SW, Rochester, MN 55905 (berbari.elie@mayo.edu).

ORCID
Gianrico Farrugia: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3473-5235

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TABLE. Mayo Clinic Strategies for COVID-19

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| 2. Analytics and Prediction Modeling |
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COVID-19 = coronavirus disease 2019; SARS-CoV-2 = severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2.