



## **Northwest Healthcare Remains Steadfast in Service to Tucson Area**

As our community experiences another COVID surge, I write today with gratitude for the resilience of our provider teams at Northwest Healthcare. Each and every employee in our system has played a role in keeping our community healthy, and in caring for those who do become sick. I am incredibly proud of the work they do, but I am also proud of our healthcare system as a whole.

Northwest Healthcare is comprised of Northwest Medical Center, Oro Valley Hospital, Northwest Medical Sahuarita, free standing emergency centers in Marana and Vail, and urgent cares, physician practices and surgery centers throughout the region. Soon, we'll add a fourth hospital – Northwest Medical Center Houghton – to our family of services. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how interconnected we all are, the impact each one of us can have and the benefit of working together for a common cause. We care deeply about our community and remain steadfast in our commitment to deliver safe, quality healthcare services.

The arc of life is always present in a hospital, but its frailty has been very clear this past year. More than 800,000 patients received the medical care they needed thanks to our physicians, nurses, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, lab techs, housekeepers, food service workers and other providers who have worked tirelessly to maintain a safe environment. Our family of caregivers put aside their personal fears and concerns and came to help every single day, with bravery and courage.

More than 2000 babies took their first breaths at Northwest Medical Center and we celebrated with their moms. Tens of thousands of our friends and neighbors walked away in better shape than when they came in – with less pain following a joint replacement, a heart beating stronger after open heart surgery or a smile of relief when their screening mammogram or colonoscopy was clear.

With pride and relief we cheered hundreds of patients who left for home after beating COVID-19. But there have been times of sadness too, as our caregivers helped patients transition at the end of life and comforted the loved ones who grieve for their loss.

Helping people get well and live healthier is rewarding work, and we are grateful for the trust every patient places in us. And we feel the support of the community as you've extended your thanks and encouragement through countless meals, beautiful cards, hand-sewn mask donations, painted rocks around our campuses and so many other touching gestures. A year and a half later, we are still here daily, caring for COVID patients and the many others who need our help. Your support -- in the form of cards, banners, meals, and well wishes is still so appreciated. If you know someone who works in our hospitals or clinics, please check in with them -- and let them know you are grateful for the work they do. Your support is critical in helping our team get through an incredibly difficult time.

Led by a local administration and advisory boards made up of community leaders and physicians, we've been intensely focused on expanding access to healthcare throughout the region. We're pleased to say that our plans are moving forward -- even in spite of COVID-19. We've spent \$125 million on expansions and upgrades, breaking ground on Northwest Medical Center Houghton last April and opening Northwest Medical Center Sahuarita in November. We've purchased new equipment and made updates to Northwest Medical Center and Oro Valley Hospital, and we've recruited many new providers to our network to provide more opportunities for patients to get needed care. Many of our physicians are now offering telemedicine, making it easier than ever to see the doctor when you're in the comfort of home.

We value our relationship with Pima County. The nearly \$29 million in taxes we paid last year support critical infrastructure such as first responders, schools and roads. Wages and benefits for our nearly 3,000 employees generate buying power for local goods and services and help drive the local economy. And we deliver care for our most vulnerable residents, last year providing more than \$52 million of charity and uncompensated care.

Although our community is currently experiencing another surge in COVID-19 cases, I believe hope is on the horizon -- vaccines are readily available and many in our community have already been vaccinated. While we look forward to a time when COVID-19 is a distant memory, we remain committed to serving our strong and vibrant community -- now and in the future.

*Brian Sinotte is the Market Chief Executive Officer for Northwest Healthcare.*