



milestones



Weill Cornell Medicine Responds to COVID-19

Dr. Marianne Nellis, in the pediatric ICU, holding a sign of thanks for our healthcare heroes

DRISDY KEE, LCSW

Standing at the epicenter of a devastating pandemic, Weill Cornell Medicine and its extraordinary front-line medical workers are battling COVID-19 with ingenuity, tireless labor and the support of generous donors throughout the world. This close and powerful collaboration is driving Weill Cornell's successes against the coronavirus and is helping critically ill patients survive.

Donors from as far away as Europe, Asia and the Middle East have contributed more than \$17.2 million to aid the institution's efforts to procure medical supplies, feed healthcare workers, conduct research and ensure an uninterrupted flow of essential services. Additionally, donors have arranged contributions of large quantities of face masks, respirators, other personal protective equipment (PPE), and even food.

"The kindness, decency and generosity evident everywhere in our hard-hit community is just overwhelming," says Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean.

"Thanks to our donors, Weill Cornell's front-line staff are able to face the pandemic with teamwork and resolve – exemplifying the very best of the Weill Cornell family."

The influx in donations has come during an unprecedented response to the pandemic in New York City. To handle the flood of patients with severe COVID-19, Weill Cornell and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital converted several operating and recovery rooms into new intensive care units (ICUs). Many physicians and nurses left other assignments to join colleagues in the emergency rooms and ICUs.

Researchers put aside their own work to focus on coronavirus testing and therapies, creating a COVID-19 Research Alliance to study the disease. The alliance is made up of top physician-scientists who are working together to innovate immediate scientific contributions during this time of global pandemic.

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From Our Dean



Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the Weill Cornell Medicine community has worked together, under extraordinary circumstances, to combat this virus and save lives. This ethos – that we are stronger when we work together – has long informed our culture at Weill Cornell Medicine. And now, at the epicenter of this historic pandemic, we have harnessed the strength of this collaborative spirit in order to persist in the face of this unprecedented challenge. It is because of our ongoing partnerships with our leadership, donors and friends that we are so well equipped for this moment.

As you will read in our cover story, Weill Cornell Medicine is combating COVID-19 from every possible angle. Our team of brave physicians and nurses is working tirelessly to provide top-tier care for their patients; our researchers are grappling with some of the most difficult and urgent scientific questions of our time; and our students are witnessing, firsthand, the ever-changing medical landscape and the vital importance of our healthcare workers.

In these past few weeks, I have felt immensely proud of what we have all accomplished together, despite our social distance, and have been inspired by the ongoing strength and commitment of the Weill Cornell family. We have already received countless donations to support our COVID-19 efforts, and are grateful for our donors' generosity and vision during this difficult time. Each of us – those on the front lines and those of us staying home to help flatten the curve – are helping to shape the trajectory of this virus and carve out a path forward.

We will weather this storm. And when the storm has passed, we will look back at this time and know that together, we each played a critical role in saving lives.

With gratitude,

Augustine M.K. Choi, MD

Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean, Weill Cornell Medicine
Provost for Medical Affairs, Cornell University

Weill Cornell Medicine Responds to COVID-19 continued from cover

Members of the Board of Overseers responded to the COVID-19 crisis with more than \$10 million in donations. This is highlighted by a \$5 million gift from Overseer Maurice R. Greenberg and his wife, Corinne Greenberg, which will be used to support COVID-19 research at Weill Cornell Medicine.

The outpouring of generosity from our donors to support our COVID-19 response has enabled us to allocate \$1 million to a relief fund for employees in need of support, due to extraordinary financial hardship directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I want to thank you, donors, from the bottom of my heart for your selfless act," writes one employee, a single mother who is helping support a newly unemployed family member. "This grant will help me and my family tremendously!"

In March, the Partners of Citadel and Citadel Securities – led by CEO and longtime Weill Cornell benefactor Kenneth C. Griffin – made a \$2 million gift to Weill Cornell Medicine to develop new approaches to test and protect people from the novel coronavirus.

Some donors have found creative and entertaining ways to raise money for Weill Cornell patients and staff. An organized virtual indoor stationary-bike ride for 1,300 people in mid-



April raised funds for front-line staff. Earlier in the month, the Tangiers Blues Band, with guest guitarist Gary Clark Jr., streamed a virtual benefit concert to raise funds for Weill Cornell. Rolling Stone magazine called the show, which attracted 27,000 viewers, one of the best-streamed performances of the stay-at-home era. More recently, Weill Cornell participated in Giving Tuesday Now, a global day of giving and unity, inviting people to donate to COVID-19 efforts and submit thank you notes to front-line staff.

"Our community has truly come together to show its support for the doctors, nurses and staff of Weill Cornell, who are working tirelessly to save lives," says Jessica Bibliowicz, chairman of the Board of Overseers. "Their gifts will ensure that we emerge from this unprecedented crisis stronger than ever."

\$2 Million Gift from the Partners of Citadel and Citadel Securities to Fund New COVID-19 Advances at Weill Cornell Medicine

With the goal of advancing the fight against COVID-19, the Partners of Citadel and Citadel Securities have made a \$2 million gift to Weill Cornell Medicine to develop new approaches to protect people from the disease and identify new cases of it.

The gift from Citadel – led by longtime Weill Cornell Medicine benefactor Kenneth C. Griffin – will support two initiatives: a national, randomized clinical trial evaluating whether an anti-malaria medication can protect front-line healthcare workers from COVID-19, and the accelerated development and national rollout of a rapid-response test for the infection.

Mr. Griffin is the founder and CEO of Citadel, one of the world's leading alternative investment managers, and the founder of Citadel Securities, a leading global market maker. His many generous contributions to Weill Cornell Medicine span more than a decade and total \$10 million in support of numerous institutional initiatives.

"As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to surge, we must battle the virus on multiple fronts so that we can slow the spread of infection, reduce its burden on our healthcare system and save lives," says Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine. "This generous gift from Ken Griffin and the Partners of Citadel and Citadel Securities will advance our efforts to achieve these goals."

"The fortitude and compassion of our front-line responders is heroic. Doctors, nurses and countless others continue to relentlessly battle the virus and selflessly care for the sick, while our nation's researchers pursue the science needed to ultimately lead us out of this pandemic," says Mr. Griffin. "Collaboration and philanthropic support are essential to accelerate medical solutions and will be the difference in protecting as many lives as possible."

Healthcare professionals are at higher risk for COVID-19 infection than the general population. Initial international data suggests that approximately 20 percent of these workers become infected as a result of their efforts to care for sick patients, with rates higher in areas where there is a limited supply of protective equipment, such as masks and gowns. While healthcare workers continue to use this equipment – considered the best line of defense – at all times, there is currently no existing therapy that can prevent healthcare workers from acquiring the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19, or from asymptotically spreading it to others, including their own families.

Clinical Trial to Test Anti-Malaria Medication's Protective Qualities

The national clinical trial will evaluate whether hydroxychloroquine – an anti-malaria drug that has been identified as potentially effective against COVID-19 – can protect front-line healthcare workers from contracting the virus. Investigators plan to enroll into the trial 15,000 healthcare workers, including 1,500 from



New York City, from intensive care units, emergency departments and COVID-19 wards nationwide over a two-week period, with the randomized clinical trial lasting a month. The gift will support increased New York City enrollment of healthcare workers into this study.

The study is funded nationally by Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), the non-profit healthcare organization, and is being implemented through the PCORnet Network. INSIGHT,

run by Dr. Rainu Kaushal – senior associate dean of clinical research and chair of population health sciences at Weill Cornell Medicine and physician-in-chief of population health sciences at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center – is a unique partnership of leading academic medical centers in the New York City area and is serving as the work's regional hub. INSIGHT trial sites are being led by Dr. Timothy Wilkin, an associate professor of medicine and an infectious disease specialist at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Rapid Test to Detect COVID-19

The rapid-response test for COVID-19, developed by Dr. Christopher Mason – an associate professor of physiology and biophysics, the WorldQuant Foundation Research Scholar and co-director of the WorldQuant Initiative for Quantitative Prediction at Weill Cornell Medicine – leverages loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) technology, a rapid gene-identification technique, and indicates a positive result with a color change. The test, which also received funding support from WorldQuant, the quantitative investment firm founded by Overseer Igor Tulchinsky, can complement current diagnostic methods and use samples derived from mouth swabs, instead of nasal swabs. It also does not necessitate the use of equipment or supplies that are both currently in short supply, while also having the potential to rapidly expand in scale. Dr. Mason is also an associate professor of computational genomics in computational biomedicine in the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Institute for Computational Biomedicine at Weill Cornell.

"Collaboration and philanthropic support are essential to accelerate medical solutions and will be the difference in protecting as many lives as possible."

Kenneth C. Griffin

Ways to Give:

Support Weill Cornell's COVID-19 Response Efforts

Ways to Give explores the many ways our donors help Weill Cornell Medicine advance breakthroughs in research, provide compassionate care to patients and educate the next generation of medical leaders. Through a variety of programs, every donor is able to make a powerful impact. To learn more about giving opportunities, please visit give.weill.cornell.edu.

Weill Cornell Medicine has been at the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis since it began in New York, providing compassionate care to patients and launching research efforts to address testing and treatment. These efforts have been supported through two funds: the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund and the COVID-19 Fund to Support Frontline Staff.

The Emergency Response Fund supports the expansion of Weill Cornell's research studies and clinical trials, including our testing capacity and strategies, as well as the purchase of medical equipment that can provide fast and accurate results. Gifts to this fund also protect the health and safety of Weill Cornell Medicine physicians and medical staff by helping to provide personal protective equipment (PPE), including surgical masks, respirators, gowns, gloves, visors and other essential supplies.



The Fund to Support Frontline Staff helps provide free meal delivery and childcare services for our clinical staff working on the front lines in the ICU, Emergency Department, testing labs, and other units and practice sites.

Weill Cornell Medicine is leading in the global effort to end the coronavirus pandemic, mobilizing every resource to expand knowledge of COVID-19 and apply it successfully at the front lines of care. Weill Cornell Medicine has seen a tremendous outpouring of generosity and encouragement across our community, and we thank everyone for joining us in these efforts. We are stronger together.

For information about funding our COVID-19 response efforts, please contact Rebecca Rutherford, Director, Fundraising Strategies and Capital Campaigns, at rlr4001@med.cornell.edu.

Student Response to COVID

Heeding the call for help in battling COVID-19, Weill Cornell Medicine medical students volunteered to graduate early to support their colleagues on the front lines of the pandemic

Nearly two-thirds of fourth-year medical students opted to graduate in April, enabling these newly minted MDs to provide much-needed assistance before they start their residencies. A total of 109 students were qualified to graduate in 2020; all of them, including students who did not graduate early, will receive their diplomas during the scheduled commencement on May 28.

While the number of patients seeking hospitalization is slowing, the need for front-line healthcare workers, including doctors, remains strong. The former Weill Cornell Medicine students will be performing important support duties.

"Everyone at Weill Cornell is so appreciative of their selflessness and willingness to step up and lend a hand during this unprecedented crisis," says Overseer Natasha Leibel, MD '98,

president of the Weill Cornell Medical College Alumni Association. "They are a talented and hard-working group of professionals, and we are so proud of them."

This is not the first time that Weill Cornell Medical College students have graduated into a national crisis. During both world wars, the school accelerated the curricula in order to supply the war effort with more physicians. This most recent graduation is in keeping with the institution's long tradition of responding to pressing community needs.

"We went into this field to help people, and now is the time to help," says Joanna Gao, the 2020 class president. "I'm excited at the possibility of being a source of support in any way I can."

An Outpouring of In-Kind Gifts

Individuals, civic groups, companies and even musical artists have shown their support for Weill Cornell Medicine's front-line healthcare workers with a wide range of in-kind gifts.

The generous donations include tens of thousands of surgical masks, gloves, gowns, ventilators and other essential medical supplies. Equally appreciated were gifts of personal-care products, along with iPads for telemedicine. One New York City veterinarian offered free vaccines and exams for the pets of front-line staff. Several restaurants provided food to keep physicians, nurses and other staff well fed while they cared for critically ill patients.



Rabbi Eitan Rubin of yeshiva Beit Medrash of Great Neck supplied more than 15,000 face masks.

Overseer Howard P. Milstein arranged for the donation of 800,000 face masks. Other notable donors include yeshiva Beit Medrash of Great Neck, led by Rabbi Eitan Rubin, who organized a donation of more than 15,000 masks and more than 250 bottles of hand sanitizer; the Rudin Management Company, Inc., which donated 1,300 masks and gloves; and the Committee of 100, which donated large quantities of masks and isolation gowns.

"Our first responders, doctors and nurses are performing miracles of compassion and healing on the front lines every day," says Rabbi Rubin. "We want to help any way we can to ensure they are able to do their jobs well and safely."

Gifts at a Glance

Total Funds Received (to date):

\$17,857,217

Funds raised for COVID-19 efforts:

COVID-19 Fund to Support Frontline Staff:

\$7,043,822

COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund:

\$3,088,395

COVID-19 Research Fund:

\$7,725,000

Number of free meals provided to front-line medical staff:

17,000 meals per week



Childcare support enabled by the COVID-19 Fund to Support Front-line Staff: The equivalent of nearly **10,000 "days of child care"** for more than **450 employees**

Gifts came from **35 U.S. states** and around the globe, including **Bulgaria, England, Hong Kong, Ireland, Lichtenstein and Qatar**



Saluting Scholarship Donors

Scholarship donors make an extraordinary impact on the lives of medical students at Weill Cornell Medicine

We would typically be celebrating our students during this season of commencement, which is when we also hold our Salute to Scholarship event, an annual celebration that brings together medical students with the donors who support them. In an effort to keep the spirit of these celebrations alive during the COVID-19 crisis, we are taking the opportunity to do just that. The steady support of donors enabled the institution to launch its transformative new scholarship program last fall, eliminating medical education debt for all students who qualify for financial aid.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, Weill Cornell Medicine awarded more than \$7.8 million in scholarships to qualified students. This academic year, 226 students received scholarship grants, allowing them more freedom to pursue their goals.

The expanded financial aid program is built upon decades of philanthropy from numerous benefactors whose gifts have established and strengthened the institution's existing scholarship endowment – an achievement of more than \$155 million. Weill Cornell Medicine is committed to raising additional funds to support its scholarship endowment and ensure that the new program is sustained permanently.

Donors' past and future scholarship contributions are vital to the success of the institution's future healthcare leaders. By making a gift to support education and scholarship, donors help many of this country's promising students advance their careers in medicine.

The institution is grateful to the scholarship donors who make it possible for these students to pursue their dreams. To see the list of fully funded scholarships, go to:

give.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/salute_to_scholarship_5_2020.pdf



"Weill Cornell Medicine was my dream school. Without my scholarships, it would have been very difficult for me to pursue my medical training here. **I am extremely grateful for the generous support I have received**, which allowed me to become a caring physician while developing my leadership skills and discovering my passion for surgery."

Francesca Voza, Class of 2020

"Attending Weill Cornell Medicine has been such an honor, but to also have **the support of all the generous donors has made this experience even more special and humbling**. Thank you all so much! The faculty and staff are supportive and caring, and my classmates have helped me greatly along the way. It's truly a collaborative environment."

Jin Pyon, Class of 2023



“Thank you all for your generous, substantial donations to Weill Cornell Medicine. I’m grateful to have had scholarship aid to allow me to focus on school without further financial stress and the crushing weight of loan debt. My mom brought me to this country in search of a brighter future. Without my scholarships, it would be financially impossible for me to attend medical school in New York City at an institution the caliber of Weill Cornell Medicine.”

Juan Lopez, Class of 2021



“I am so grateful for the family, opportunity and generosity that I have found here at Weill Cornell Medicine. I moved to the United States from Venezuela when I was eight and never dreamed that I would have the opportunity to pursue my aspiration of becoming a neurosurgeon and serving diverse communities of patients. **The incredible scholarship support I received from Weill Cornell liberated me to choose the medical school where I felt I could have the greatest impact.** I feel blessed to be here.”

Miguel Tusa Lavieri, Class of 2023

“As a scholarship recipient at Weill Cornell Medicine, I have been relieved from the burden of financial constraints on my education and allowed to experience the genuine curiosity of being a medical student without worries of debt. **I am thankful for this opportunity and only hope to pay it forward in the future.**”

Zara Adamou, Class of 2021



Scholarship Hall of Fame 2020 Inductees

The Scholarship Hall of Fame, established in 2019, recognizes and celebrates donors who have given or directed more than \$1 million to support scholarship at Weill Cornell Medicine. Below are the 2020 inductees.

Margo Krody Blutt and Mitchell J. Blutt, MD
Silas Chou & Family
Estate of Edith Allen Clark
The Gilbert Family Foundation

Karen T. Hochman
The Weill Family Foundation and Joan and Sanford I. Weill
Philip G. Woodward Trust
Lillian Yung, EdD

Joan and Sanford I. Weill Exemplary Achievement Award

The third annual Joan and Sanford I. Weill Exemplary Achievement Award was presented on March 3 to Dr. Barbara Hempstead, dean of the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences, the O. Wayne Isom Professor of Medicine and professor of neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain & Mind Research Institute. The award, established in 2018 in honor of the Weills, celebrates physicians and scientists whose transformational work enhances healthcare worldwide. A distinguished hematologist, neuroscientist and administrator, Dr. Hempstead is



From left: Joan Weill; Overseer Chair Emeritus Sanford I. Weill; Board of Overseers Chairman Jessica Bibliowicz; Weill Exemplary Achievement Award recipient Dr. Barbara Hempstead; Dean Augustine M.K. Choi; and Dr. Mary Choi

a leading force in academic medicine whose more than 30-year career at Weill Cornell Medicine has spanned research, patient care and education.

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