

# COMMITMENT TO YOUR CARE

## *continues to be our priority*

Dear Patient:

As a result of COVID-19 pandemic, many of you have experienced either delays or changes in your care for your breast condition. As your cancer providers, we share many of your worries. As partners in your care, we know we are doing all we can to keep you out of harm's way.

Leveraging technology and research, we collaborated on a national level to design individual treatment plans that meet your needs, meet our public health responsibilities, and, most of all, keep you safe. The situation is changing rapidly, and most of us did not expect nor prepare for this pandemic even two months ago. We acknowledge the stress and anxiety caused by these delays in your treatment and the disruption to your future plans. All of us are trying to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on today, tomorrow, and our future.

**Please understand, changes in your treatment do not mean your treatment is not necessary or not needed.**

Your treatment is needed and will be done in ways that are safe for you and for the health care personnel caring for you.

A few weeks ago, several national organizations representing cancer experts developed recommendations for how to best care for breast cancer patients and those at high risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. We looked at the best information available and weighed the risks and challenges that COVID-19 has placed on our hospital resources and staff. We examined several factors to draft our guidance, balancing what is the safe standard of care for our patients against decreasing hospital resources and increased risk to patients and health care personnel. Emerging data has shown that cancer patients and patients undergoing surgery are particularly vulnerable to severe infection from COVID-19. In some cases, the risks of coming to the hospital for treatment outweighed any benefits.

We found that delays or changes in treatment are less likely to lower your survival outcome than a COVID-19 infection. High-level studies show that delays in treatment or changing the sequence of treatment are not associated with any change to your survival or any growth in your tumor. Some common changes to treatment plans are:

1. Patients with hormone receptor-positive cancers, taking hormonal blocking medication, and delaying surgery for over a year saw no difference in overall survival.
2. Patients with triple negative or HER2+ breast cancer, given chemotherapy, and delaying surgery saw no difference in overall survival.
3. Patients having prophylactic breast surgery to reduce risk of breast cancer have a higher risk of developing COVID-19 than developing a breast cancer in the time they are waiting for surgery.

We are partners in your care. We don't have all the answers, but we are using the information we have to do our best to keep you, your family, and your cancer team safe. Like other unsung heroes in this pandemic, you are a hero by partnering with us to help curb the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to evaluate the data and keep you updated.

A list of [COVID-19 Resources from Cancer Patient & Advocacy Organizations](#) is also available if needed. Please stay well and stay tuned.

Sincerely,

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