



March 26, 2020

Dear friends,

Greetings from Kenya! I know that we just sent an update recently ([click here](#) if you missed it), but since we have received many inquiries about how COVID-19 is impacting us at Tenwek we decided to send another brief update.

Like most of you, we are feeling the huge impact of COVID-19 on our daily lives as well as on all future planning. Kenya had its first case of coronavirus diagnosed on Friday, March 13th and as of today is up to 28 cases. Testing is still very limited, so it is hard to say what the true numbers might be. Tenwek has not seen any cases yet, but we are busy making preparations to respond appropriately when it does reach our doors.

The Kenyan government acted quickly with the first COVID-19 diagnosis, immediately closing all schools in the country, banning public gatherings and events, implementing mandatory 14-day quarantine for all international entries, and only allowing citizens and residents to enter the country. Shortly thereafter (with the next few cases), further restrictions were put into place, including a ban on all open-air markets, recommendations for social distancing and reduction of movement to essential travel only, a mandate for all public transport to reduce their capacity to 50%, and a suspension of all passenger flights into and out of Kenya. So as of today (the 25th), we are officially "stuck" in Kenya without any knowledge of when the borders will be open again.

At Tenwek, we have tried to maintain a presence for our community that reflects the hope and peace that we have in Christ... applying best-practices based on current knowledge of COVID-19 while maintaining a spirit of peace rather than fear. You can see the above picture of a banner reflecting these principles which is being used as a part of our community education and messaging... "We are not scared. We are prepared." Last Thursday (the 19th) Tenwek Hospital implemented widespread screening for all staff, patients, and visitors upon entering the grounds, and visitation hours were

decreased to one hour per day and one visitor per patient. Elective surgeries are cancelled for now, and smaller teams of "essential" providers are being encouraged. Meetings are being held almost daily to make plans for the clinical possibilities, evaluate protocols, devise communications, and educate staff. The mortuary chapel has been transformed into a 6-bed holding area for those with suspected COVID-19 while awaiting test results. Another larger area is currently being renovated in case we need to treat larger numbers of patients.

As much as we try to prepare, in reality, our resources are indeed limited, and we are sobered by the potential reality of this pandemic in our region. If the numbers and severity of those infected rise in our region as they have in some areas of the world, our resources will be quickly consumed and overwhelmed. The best chances for good outcomes from this pandemic in Africa are based around containment of spread. There are many factors stacked against most people in this region with regard to COVID-19, such as close living quarters, poor sanitation abilities, general poverty, lesser access to healthcare, malnutrition and other health co-morbidities.

As a family, we have personally been impacted by all of these changes... Rees was sent home from boarding school early for the April break, and her return is already delayed until at least May 11th... All volunteers fled back to their home countries due to rapidly progressing travel restrictions, so we are left without our usual support from short-term visiting doctors... We had planned three weeks away from Tenwek in April for a medical conference and a retreat, which of course have been cancelled. We are sensing a lot of fear within the community and praying that this does not escalate toward civil unrest should things worsen.

Personally, we are vacillating widely between various conflicting emotions... fear and anxiety about the unknown, sadness and grief over loss of plans and expectations, exhaustion from the constant mental energy being spent toward anticipating an uncertain future enemy, and of course bright moments of courage due to our resolve to be present and active where God has placed us, and optimism due to our ultimate trust in a sovereign God. Sometimes all of these emotions seem to exist within a short span of a few moments! Our heads know all the "right" answers that followers of Christ should have... answers about peace in times of fear and trust in times of uncertainty... but our hearts are sometimes slow to follow those "right" attitudes. Do you feel the same way?

I have always loved Paul's writings, and many of his letters have given me encouragement in these uncertain times. He admonished the early followers of Christ that our great power comes from God and not from ourselves, and encourages us to be guided by faith (the unseen) rather than by sight. That can be difficult for data-driven doctors to do, and for humans in general! But what game-changer this can be! Listen how Paul describes that God's power in us flips every situation... **"We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but**

never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. (Can I add my own...We are stuck overseas, but not trapped. We are lonely with social distancing, but not alone.) ~ 2 Cor 4:8-9

~Please pray that we can persevere in this mind of Christ, holding to His power rather than fearing the limits of our own.

~ Pray for God to end the spread of this pandemic... He is able!

~ Pray for calm minds and actions in our region, that fears will not lead to unrest.

~ Pray for us at Tenwek Hospital, that God will use us to show His love to our patients in this difficult time, and that we will have wisdom in the many challenging decisions to be made in the coming days if/when we face COVID-19 with limited resources and staffing.

~ We are praying for YOU, that God will keep you safe and give you peace. Feel free to reach out to us if you need encouragement or personal prayers (just reply to this email).



Entrance screening is done for all entering the hospital.



A large stamped indicates who has passed screening.



A surgical resident is being trained on proper use of PPE.



Hand-washing efforts have been ramped up.



Donating blood, as our blood bank is critically low.

Grace and peace,

The Many Family
Heath, Angela, Rees, and Mary Taylor
www.manyfamilyonmission.com