

“I have been a Department of Medicine Chairman and Hospital Chief of Service for 38 years at 2 different medical schools. The Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center and New York Medical College/Westchester Medical Center, institutions in the Metropolitan New York Area.

I have been involved in helping to lead our response to the AIDs and Ebola Epidemics. The Bronx, where I worked, was an epicenter for AIDS-HIV dating back to 1982 and I have watched the incredible progress made in the management of what was always a fatal condition. AIDS-HIV for the most part is an outpatient disorder with excellent medical treatments now available. However, I remember how hopeless it was in 1982.

Almost 40 years later, we are confronted with COVID-19. The epicenter in New York was in Westchester County where I live and now work. Over the past 6 weeks, our faculty and house-staff at Westchester Medical Center have done a remarkable job in facing head on COVID 19 virus. They have exhibited great courage and dedication working with our nurses and other support personnel. I have been in the hospital every day since March 13 and can only attest to how well our health care system operated in both patient care and screening. I do miss having students on the wards and in the practice but many did volunteer on the phones as part of the screening process.

I have lived through various viral disease crises, poliomyelitis before the vaccines in 1955, the Asiatic Flue of 1957 that led to the flu vaccine; I witnessed the swine flu epidemic of 1976 while I was in the Army where the vaccine, which was developed, was more dangerous than the disease.

We are not finished yet. We will get past COVID-19, but other infectious disease processes will occur and we need to be ready, using our strengths in public health, basic science and clinical care.”

William Frishman, MD, CLA-(MED '69)