

## Heroes Beyond the Mask

# Jose Alejandro Coba

Infectious Disease Fellow



“  
*Stay home for the  
ones you love the most.*  
”  
– Dr. Coba, MD



"I am the infectious disease Fellow currently on COVID service. As of this week, there are many facets to the role I play. We help manage the COVID positive patients along with MICU and COVID hospitalist teams. We recommend therapies directed at COVID along with any other ID diagnosis the patient may have. We screen and enroll patients in the two clinical trials currently underway in our institution (Remdesivir vs convalescent plasma therapy). We are also in charge of reviewing and, if warranted, approving testing for any patient in any of the non-COVID floor where there is a clinical suspicion for COVID. We are also in charge of reviewing all PUIs and discussing them with primary teams.

I am on call 24/7 for one week. My day usually starts about 7 am when I arrive to the hospital. First thing is talking to hospitalist team and ICU team regarding new PUIs admitted overnight. There is a medicine resident during the week that helps me with this and track any other PUIs (someone who has a COVID testing pending) that may not be in our main covid teams. We review PUIs and come up with plans. As the resident work on PUIs, I usually review all the positive patients. We then round with the attending and update all the teams. We follow all the PUIs testing and update the chart as tests come back. Throughout the day, I received calls from outpatient clinics, non-COVID teams and the jail infirmary that want to review testing criteria, and if met, test their patients. My day in the hospital usually ends around 5-6 pm. I usually receive about 5 calls during the night pertaining PUIs and COVID [positive] patients."

[I am proud of] everyone I work with. The fact that so many people have step up to the work needed. I can speak of my department primarily and the sacrifices that some have had to do in the last few weeks. [I am inspired by] my significant other who is a second year pulm/crit fellow and gives it all while in the ICU.

[Something new I'm doing because of COVID-19 is] maybe longer walks with my dog and taking showers once I get home. [I cope with stress by] sleep[ing] as much as the pager lets me, listening to music, walking with the dog, talking to [my] significant other, and disconnecting from the world (not looking at news). [Wellness means] having a balance in life. Most of my day involves my career, so I have to make time for my [s]elf and family.

[To me, #stayathome (or #stayingathome) means] less people coming to the hospital because of COVID, which in turn decreases in the burden on the medical system. We had a couple that were positive and during the interview they stated that they thought COVID was not serious. They were going out around town with no precautions. Now they regret their actions.

[I am] keeping family informed of accurate information. We stay home as much as possible. Only go out for dog walks and groceries every 2 weeks for essentials. Only one of us goes out. [I am grateful for my] family and their support. And the fact that they are st[a]ying home and staying healthy. [I am most hopeful for] seeing my family in Colombia again [once COVID-19 is over].

This disease is destroying families. Stay at home for the one you love the most. "