

A Message From...

KELLY BARTON, Maine Behavioral Healthcare President



Dear MBH Care Team Members,

As the two-year anniversary of the pandemic is upon us, I wanted to share some thoughts, and, more importantly, my thanks.

Perhaps you have heard the expression that it gets darkest just before the dawn.

When I look back on the past two years, I find myself focusing on the past three months and the situation we were facing: case counts and hospitalizations were soaring; our capacity to provide care was curtailed by the number of care team members who were in quarantine; and patient flow slowed to a crawl. Kronos was offline, requiring creative problem-solving as well as time-consuming workarounds to ensure care team members were paid, in full and on time. And our return-to-work protocols had to evolve rapidly – sometimes weekly – to meet quickly shifting realities.

When I take stock of what you experienced and adjusted to in December, January and February, I am genuinely astonished by the depths of your patience, flexibility and goodwill. You continued to care for our patients and each other through difficulties that were beyond extraordinary. You worked together to find solutions for asymptomatic testing, fit-testing and reconfiguring care to treat patients and keep us safe. You kept up with work requirements and performance appraisals and so many things that are challenging even in normal times. Through it all, you continued to celebrate successes great and small, and you continued to support and celebrate each other.

I'm not sure what course the pandemic will take. But I am hopeful that the recent sharp declines in positivity rates and hospitalizations will stick. I wish this for many reasons, but especially because I know what you have endured and that getting to this point has taken a toll.

I'm writing today because I want you to know that I see what you have overcome – and I want to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for your resilience and for your commitment to our patients and to each other. I am grateful to you and deeply appreciate what you have accomplished in such difficult circumstances.

As the days get longer and warmer, I hope you will find opportunities to bask not only in more sunshine, but also in the kind of happiness that comes only after hardship. We may not be out of the woods yet, but I think we deserve to experience joy and satisfaction as often as we can.

In these moments, I will continue to think of you and feel gratitude.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly J. Barton".

Kelly Barton, MPH, FACHE
President
Maine Behavioral Healthcare