Dear Colleagues:

“Don’t let fear overtake the facts” is the most important thing I can say to you this morning.

As we wake up to an America that is becoming shuttered—schools, churches, theaters, restaurants, and businesses all closed or closing for extended periods—our reality has changed dramatically. And even more extreme changes can be anticipated in the coming days.

We all have a personal threat of contracting coronavirus and the growing realization that the pandemic is rapidly changing our lives in very extreme ways. These developments can and will lead to feelings of threat and fear, panic in some, and post-traumatic stress disorder in the most dramatic cases.

To combat these emotional states in our staff and among the very vulnerable who we serve, several actions will be needed:

- Get the facts out, even if they are unpleasant or difficult. It always is better to be informed with the facts than to allow assumptions, innuendo, and rumors to fuel fear.
- Have an emergency plan of action and share that plan broadly with staff, clients, and your community.
- Maintain ongoing communication with staff and clients, so that an informed point of information is available continuously.
- Hold frequent meetings with staff, even if virtually, so that people can express their concerns, fears, and hopes.
- Provide strong emotional support where it is needed, and be less demanding about routine performance. Everyone is trying to cope in their own way.

I wish you the very best in the coming difficult days, and I am very happy to offer the services of NACBHDD and NARMH to assist you in any way that we can.

Ron

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