

'PLEASE DON'T DIE'

SON'S DAILY PLEA BEFORE I LEAVE FOR WORK AT HOSPITAL A HEART-WRENCHING EXPERIENCE, WRITES DR. NADIA ALAM



NADIA ALAM
Column

(The following is an excerpt from a social media post turned newspaper column by local physician Dr. Nadia Alam).

My six-year-old son hugs me tight. "Please don't die," he whispers. It's something he now says nearly every time I leave to go to work.

My heart squeezes.

I'm a GP-anesthetist in Georgetown. I work in a small community hospital, charming, old and in need of upgrades.

In the OR, I wipe my hands with hand sanitizer, cleaning the webs between my fingers, the bends, the folds, under my nails. I'm in scrubs. Wearing a blue hair bonnet. My phone, ID and pen in a Ziploc bag.

I slide on my N95 respirator. Out of all the protective gear, it's vital to get this one right. Get a tight seal, ensuring that no aerosolized particles of the virus leak in and infect me. The bands and sides cut into my cheeks. The filter dries the air so it catches in my throat, making me cough. I swallow.

A couple of emergency OR cases on the board today — a patient with a fracture. A patient with appendicitis. COVID-19 status: unknown. So we'll wear full protective

These thin layers of protective equipment — it's all that stands between us and COVID-19.

equipment. Because of my job, I'm at high risk of catching COVID-19.

Maybe I can keep the same N95 on for both cases? As long as it's not soiled or damaged or difficult to breathe through, as long as I don't take it off to eat or drink, I should be able to use my N95 for a long time. Maybe the whole day.

With the N95 tightly bound to my face, I put on the rest of my gear — goggles, face shields, gown, double gloves.

And the accompanying worry: we don't have enough. Not enough N95 respirators, surgical masks, gloves, gowns, face shields, goggles. None of us know from when or where the next shipment will come. Working in the community is worse — many doctors have a week's supply left. The uncertainty is terrifying.

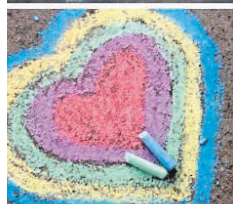
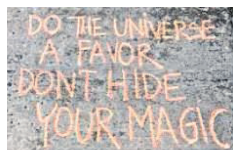
The pandemic has already hit hospitals downtown, some are also at risk of running out. "It's a war zone," a doctor downtown texted last week.

These thin layers of protective equipment — it's all that stands between us and COVID-19.

Dr. Nadia Alam is a Georgetown physician and past president of the Ontario Medical Association.

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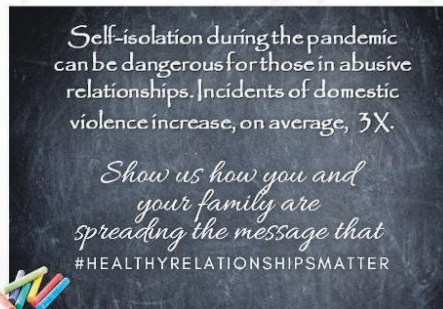
#CHALKABOUTLOVE



#ChalkAboutLove

with Halton Women's Place

Share a message on social media, post a message in your window, or chalk a message on your driveway!



HWP illustration

Halton Women's Place has started a feel good challenge called #chalkaboutlove, inviting residents to post a photo on social media of artwork or an inspiring message created in their driveway or window. Tag @hagwomensplace, using the hashtag #healthyrelationshipsmatter. Photos can also be sent to your local newspaper to sleblanc@metroland.com.

OTTAWA'S ECONOMIC PLAN FOR STEERING US THROUGH PANDEMIC

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE PROGRAMS IN PLACE TO HELP THOSE AFFECTED BY PANDEMIC, WRITES MICHAEL CHONG



MICHAEL CHONG
Column

With Parliament's approval, the Government of Canada has created a COVID-19 Economic Response Plan with programs in place for individuals, businesses and industries being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Information on all programs can be found on the government's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan webpage at canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html or by calling (833) 784-4397.

I encourage you to consult the Economic Response Plan's webpage to get the most up-to-date information on its programs — programs continue to be tweaked as the pandemic unfolds.

Some of the programs in the Economic Response Plan include:

- Canada Emergency Response Benefit — a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month for up to 4 months to eligible workers who have lost their income due to COVID-19;

- Enhancements to the Canada Child Benefit — an extra \$300 per child through the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) for 2019-20;

- Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy — will cover 75 per cent of salaries for qualifying businesses, for a 12-week period, retroactive to March 15th, 2020; and

- The Canada Emergency Business Account — will provide qualifying small businesses with interest-free loans of up to

\$40,000 until the end of 2022; if the loan is repaid by December 31, 2022, 25 per cent (up to \$10,000) will be forgiven.

If you have questions about the coronavirus, you can call the federal government at (833) 784-4397 or visit: canada.ca/coronavirus.

You can also visit the provincial government's coronavirus webpage at: ontario.ca/page/2019-nov-el-coronavirus.

If you believe you have contracted the coronavirus, you should contact one of the following:

- Your doctor;
- Halton Region Public Health at 311, or
- Telehealth Ontario at (866) 797-0000.

To obtain assistance, please contact us by phone, email or on my Facebook and Twitter accounts. As always, you can call me at (905) 702-2597.

Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills.

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newsroom@theifp.ca
IndependentAndFreePress
@IFP_11

WHO WE ARE

Publisher
Kelly Montague
Regional Managing Editor
Catherine O'Hara
Managing Editor
Karen Miceli
Distribution Representative
Iouliana Polar
Real Estate
Kristie Pells
Regional Production Manager
Manuel Garcia
Halton Media General Manager
Vicki Dillane

CONTACT US

The Independent & Free Press
280 Guelph Street, Unit 77
Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1
Phone: 905-873-0301
Classifieds: 1-800-263-6480
Fax: 905-873-0398

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