

October 29, 2020

To My Fellow Kent County Employees & Retirees,

*I apologize, in advance, if this is not the forum for this letter to be shared.*

*I am writing this letter to hopefully help us all gain a perspective of the virus that surrounds us called COVID.*

*I have unfortunately been able to tie a face to some of the devastation that COVID can cause, because on September 20th my brother Ron, of St. Louis, Missouri, was taken to the hospital. When the paramedics were called to his home they suspected he was having a diabetic situation because he did not present with any of the normal COVID symptoms that one would suspect. His blood sugar was low and he was confused. He was taken to the ER where he remained, for the next two days, until a COVID test came back positive. He was then put in a room on a COVID floor and monitored. He began to run a fever, had a heart attack because of the pressure his heart was under, and continued to have ups and downs with his blood sugar levels. Once the fever broke and he was stabilized the doctor told him to prepare to be released on Friday afternoon September 25.*

*At about 4:00 a.m., on the morning of his release date, he spiked a fever, his blood pressure became dangerously high, his blood sugar rose, and his oxygen level plummeted. He was immediately moved to the ICU and every attempt was made to raise his oxygen level, but eventually had to be placed on a ventilator. Along with the ventilator would come a catheter, feeding tube, PIC line, art line, and insulin drip to help keep his organs at the right levels so that they would not fail. He was pumped with antibiotics and steroids and was sedated the whole time that he was hooked to the ventilator. The removal of the ventilator did not come until October 10.*

*The ventilator could not be removed until my brother could, do something that we may just take for granted, take a breath or as the hospital called it: spontaneously breathe. Just breathe! Eventually the art line, PIC line, insulin drip, catheter, and feeding tube were removed. On October 21 he passed a swallow test that allowed him to have his very first meal since September 24. He is stable now, after many weeks of highs and lows, and after spending time in rehab was able to go home on Tuesday October 27. He has a walker, an elevated toilet seat with grip bars, and a transfer bench so that he can slide into his tub to take a shower. He still has lots of rehab to do and will have life-long consequences that he will deal with from the virus itself as well as from the measures that were taken to save his life.*

*My family has been very blessed to have this type of outcome, but many other families cannot say the same and that makes me very sad. The virus does not care who it attacks and you do not have to be around someone with symptoms to get it. My brother has no idea who he got it from, but he did. His thought process, prior to this event, was that COVID was just another virus that he would get over, if he got it, but the sad news is now that he may never get over the effects. In his words, "You know that COVID isn't any joke and when I was bad my body felt like it just wanted to give up."*

*My hope is that you will never have to hear a loved one say that. I pray that we will respect this virus and the people around us who do not want themselves or their loved ones to go through what my brother and our family have gone through.*

*Respectfully,*

*With my care and concern for you and all those you love,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roxanne Parsons". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

*Roxanne Parsons*

*Department of Community Services*