



Christopher K. Dorman
President & Chief Executive Officer

Southwell, Inc.
901 East 18th Street, Tifton, GA 31793
229.353.6121
mySouthwell.com

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To Community Members of Southwell's Service Area

Dear Community Friends,

The COVID-19 events over the past few weeks have ushered all of us into uncharted territory. The relationship between a community and its health system is tightly intertwined. We each have a responsibility to care for one another. As part of that responsibility, I'm writing to share with you what is taking place in our health system.

Our entire team of clinical and administrative professionals have done an amazing job ramping up to the urgency of the situation. I have witnessed unprecedented altruism from members of our teams who have made many sacrifices to provide the safest care possible to each we are blessed to serve. The resourcefulness of our team has been remarkable. As we saw this coming, we immediately set up our Incident Command Center. Our team started working around the clock to address critical issues. We researched what was taking place at health systems in ground-zero communities such as New York, Washington and California. This allowed us to work 4-5 days ahead of issues and I believe that has helped us have more success at stopping the spread here in our community.

I am grateful for the privilege to serve such phenomenal people, and for the blessing God has given me to serve alongside them. This pandemic has presented multiple challenges, but each of these has been met with a previously planned solution that this great team has worked very hard to develop.

We have also redeployed our staff to be ready for a wave of cases. For example, we slowed down elective surgeries and shifted our operating room staff, who are experts in using personal protective equipment, throughout the hospital to train and assist the staff members who were taking care of patients with COVID-19 symptoms. All staff are engaged during this crisis to continue doing their jobs, and to be prepared to cover any other needs that may arise. That is why all our staff are deemed critical at this time.

There is no higher priority than the health and well-being of our employees, medical staff, and patients. Because of this, we have made several modifications to our visitor policies. I have heard nothing but patience and understanding from our families, and I wanted to thank you for making that sacrifice.

We have been fortunate to have high community engagement as well. Your support for us is inspiring. Many in the community are helping create protective equipment. Many are staying home to stop the spread. Many are praying for divine blessings upon our community. There are countless other examples. For this, our entire team is grateful.

I believe the combined effect of our team and our community engagement has placed us in a favorable position. From that position, we are now being called upon to help our neighbors. I know many are concerned about taking in patients from other communities with higher infection rates. I want you to know we have both a moral and a legal obligation to help. We are monitoring each patient transfer on a case-by-case basis. We will not take more than we have capacity to handle. We will use every precaution to keep our staff and other patients safe. Please know, some that have come would not have survived if we had not taken them in.

I am seeing a lot of silver lining in this terrible pandemic, but most of all, I am seeing a country that was once weakened by its dependence on everything but God, become now strengthened by this very necessary reliance.

I am seeing communities come together and find ways to demonstrate that our products no longer have to be made in China, but instead, in our home towns. I am seeing neighbors (at an approved distance) helping neighbors, and friends checking on friends.

We are here for you today and we will be here for you in the future. I'm thankful for my brave staff that shows up every day, even in a time of crisis, to give their very best. I hope our unwavering dedication is apparent. I'm thankful for you and your unwavering support as well.

Every day, I pray for God's miraculous protection over my family, at home and at Southwell, Tift Regional and Southwell Medical. I'm praying for the strongest hedge of protection over all of you. Thank you, thank Him, and may He bless you all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher K. Dorman".

Chris Dorman