Behind the Mask

Versión en español

Share Your Experience

This website is part of the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum's documentation of the NIH's role during the COVID-19 pandemic by capturing the professional and personal experiences of NIH government employees, contractors, trainees, and volunteers. Your contribution to "Behind the Mask" will be the primary source material historians will use to understand this critical time.

If you have questions, please contact us at history@nih.gov.

Graphic by MJ Hiblen @Instagram
Photographs by the NIH Clinical Center ICU Team

What We Are Looking For

Your professional or personal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic are unique and can be communicated in whatever way that you feel fitting. For work-related content, you can submit as a team or a department. Some ideas include but are not limited to:

- Filling out the questionnaire
- Participating in a short virtual interview
- Videos or audio recordings that you have created
- Photographs
- 2D and 3D Artwork
- Blogs and social media posts
- Poetry, prose, essays, and journal entries
- Spreadsheets, presentations, and other work-related projects

Submission Examples

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  Artwork: Coronavirus Flower, Adam Sanchez, CC

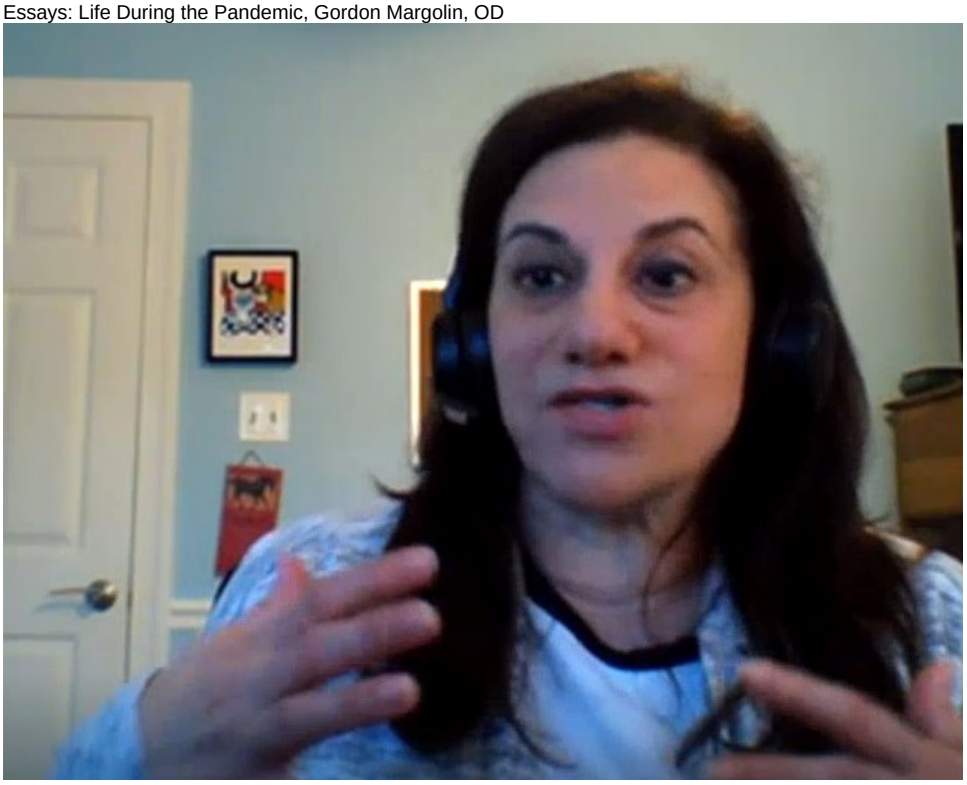
LIFE DURING THE 2020 PANDEMIC

--SURVIVING FOR MONTHS WHILE QUARANTINED

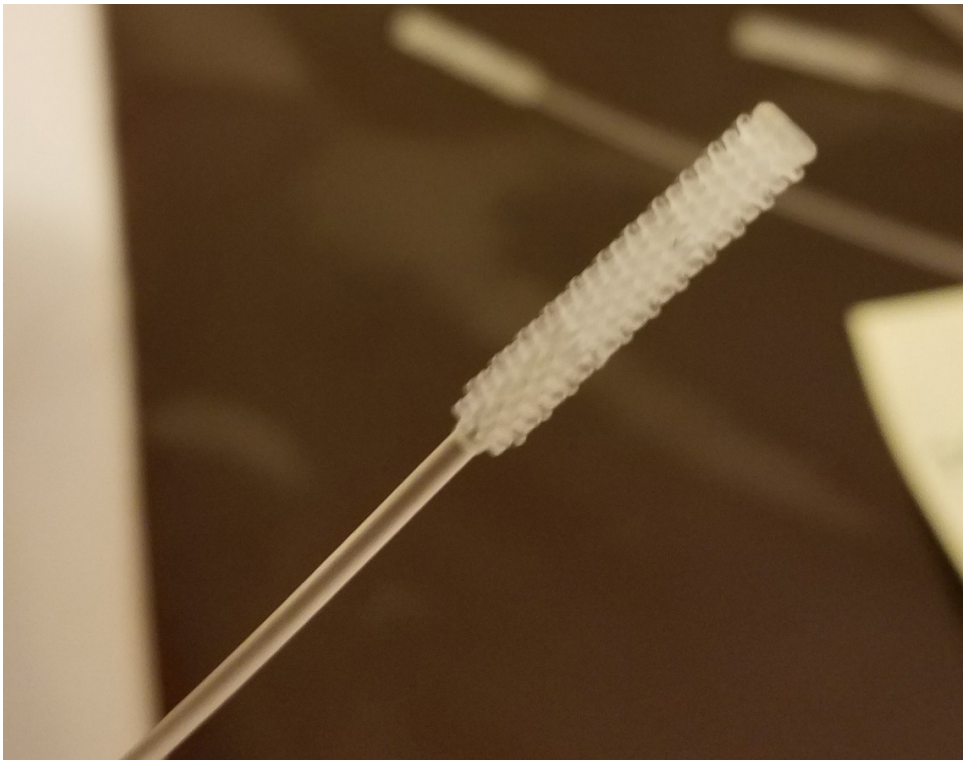
Being surrounded by millions of invisible viral particles for months, knowing they are here to stay for a while, learning of their ready transmission from person to person, and being fully aware of their increasingly deadly/chronically disabling outcomes (regardless of President Trump's assurances that 99% of the cases are harmless), requires one to follow all the precautions advised to avoid being swept into the large pool of the infected population. (Currently, in the United States more than 1 million individuals have been infected and more than 135,000 have not survived!)

All of these warnings apply particularly to those of us (of advanced age) who are especially vulnerable to this novel virus, named covid-19, a member of the Corona family of viral organisms. It arrived basically in this part of the world in early 2020 and is continuing its expansion with dire consequences as I write this note on July 16, 2020. We are hopeful that a medical cure or an effective vaccine will soon be on the market, currently the anticipated "saving grace" to shed us of this scourge.

- Essays: Life During the Pandemic, Gordon Margolin, OD



- Interviews: Lili Portilla, NCATS

- 
  Scientific or Clinical Instrumentation: 3D Printed Nasal Swab, SPIS, CIT
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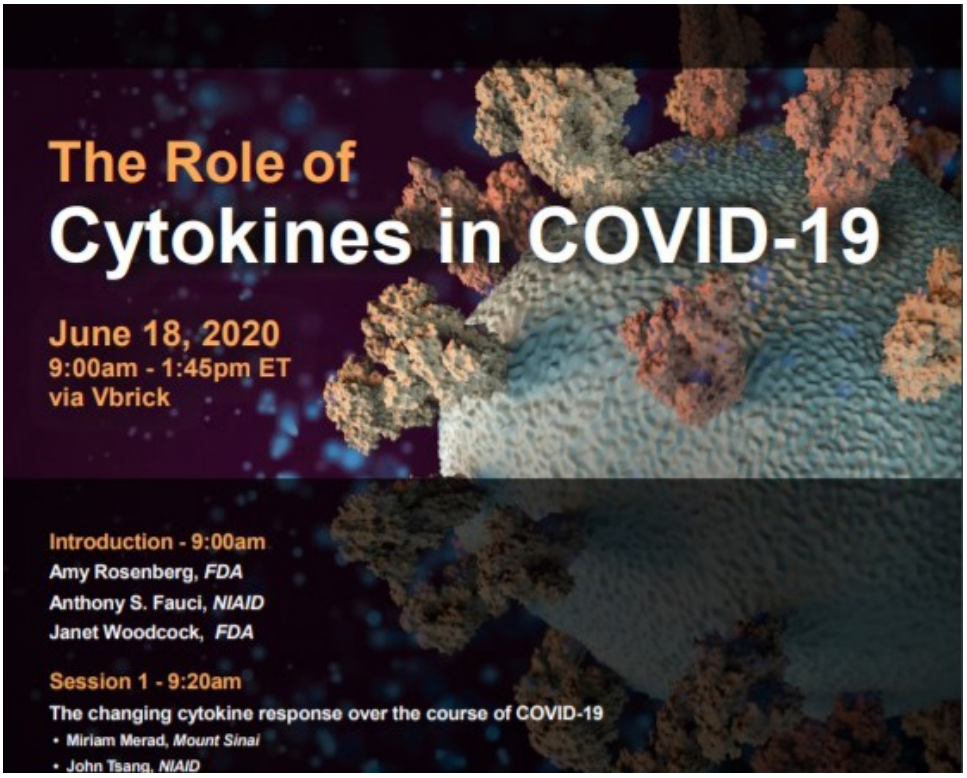
  Videos: Random Reflections from Caroline, Caroline Goon, OD

- 

Presentations: The Role of Cytokines in COVID-19, Howard Young, NCI

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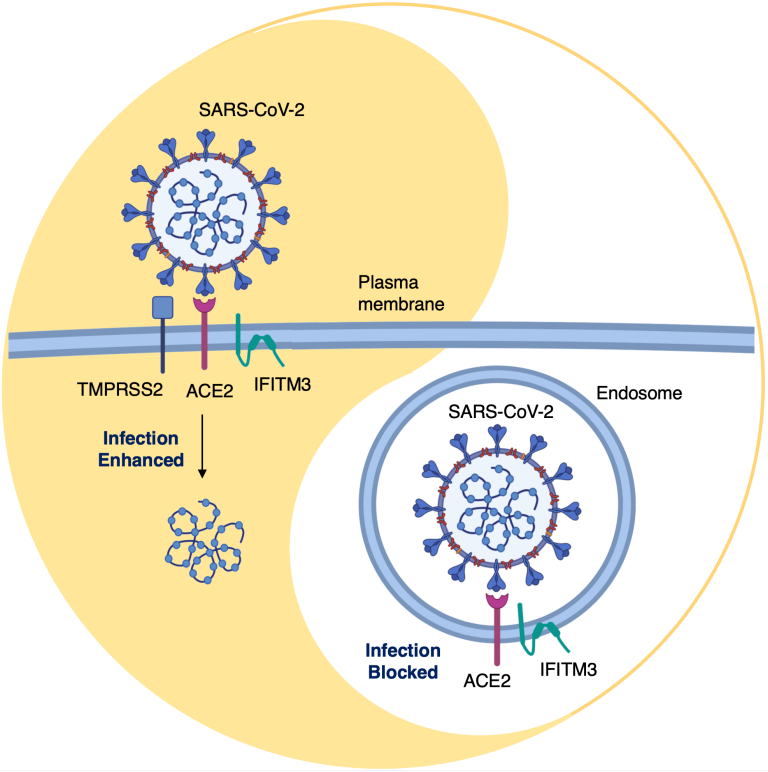
Photographs: Taking the 2nd Patient with COVID into the CC, Jeff Strich (not photographer), CC



- Graphics: Alex Compton, NCI

Researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) seek COVID-19 positive patients in the Washington, D.C. area to understand how coronavirus affects the function of the body's immune system in controlling the infection and how different organs of the body (such as the lungs, heart, brain, and kidneys) respond to the infection from its early appearance to recovery, and whether there are any long-term effects of the infection on the organs of the body.

- Work-Related Materials: Patient Recruitment Poster, Omar Echegoyen, CC

Submit Your Story

Answer questions and submit digital files that document your experience with this form. Answer as many or as few questions as you would like. Be sure to read the permission agreements at the end of the form.

Submit Your Story

Give a Short Interview Online

We have conducted virtual interviews with NIH staff who work in divisions across the organization. These interviews can be performed individually or with colleagues and team members. The written transcripts are posted as quickly as possible on the oral history page of the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum. With permission, the video components will be available to view online and may be featured in future digital exhibits and publications.

If you would like to do a short interview with us about your work, please contact

history@nih.gov

Donate Objects

Do you have physical items that capture your experience during the pandemic? We are looking for artifacts such as scientific instruments or personal objects. Many of these objects will be used by the NIH Stetten Museum and loaned to other museums such as the Smithsonian for future exhibits. Please contact us at history@nih.gov

Deed of Gift form (pdf, 12kb)

Terms and Permissions

- We are accepting submissions in languages other than English.
- Please do not include personal health information in your submissions for the privacy rights of those involved.
- Please be mindful of infringing on the intellectual property of others.
- We will acknowledge receipt of your submission.
- The Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum has the right to reject any submission or component of a submission that it considers duplicative, inappropriate, or outside the scope of the project.
- There is no deadline to submit materials as the pandemic continues. We estimate that the submission element of this project will last through 2021.
- Submissions will not be accessible immediately for public viewing. After we process and curate the materials, they will be available for historic scholarship. By the end of 2021, we hope to show many of these digital documents on our website, and we plan to feature a selection of the submissions in forthcoming exhibits and publications.
- If you have concerns about maintaining your privacy, questions regarding sensitivity to information disclosed, or dissatisfaction with the way your submission is represented online, please reach out to the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum at history@nih.gov

Contact for More Information

If you have questions about how your submission would fit into our repository, accessibility requirements, or need technical assistance, please contact Gabrielle Barr at history@nih.gov.