



A Message from University of Kentucky

PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO



Dear Campus Community,

This week, we will mark two major milestones in our response to the historic challenge of a global health pandemic.

Today, we expect to cross 100,000 doses of life-saving COVID-19 vaccines administered by the University of Kentucky.

It's part of the largest ongoing vaccination clinic in the Commonwealth and is a testament to the power of partnership. Every corner of our campus – from UK HealthCare to Athletics, from our Emergency Operations Center to volunteers in our health colleges and administrative offices and across this university — has united in common cause to achieve uncommon results.

At almost the same time, on Saturday, we will mark one year since the first diagnosed case of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth.

That patient, seriously ill, was brought to UK HealthCare from another community in Central Kentucky. Because of who we are and what we do, they were healed and are back home with their family.

Two milestones.

Two bookends — one a reminder of tragedy and fragility; the other of hope and healing.

Two compelling reminders of who we are and what we do.

This pandemic is a challenge of a century. It underscores how precious life is and how special those things we often take for granted — like gathering with friends and family for a meal or a similar normal moment — really can be for all of us.

We need connections. It's why a community like this is so important. It is inherent to who we are.

And yet, that can all be shattered in a moment by a microscopic virus that traverses continents indiscriminately, even as it magnifies discrimination and inequities of access to care.

The other milestone — what we are doing every day outside a ballfield where we more often cheer for first downs rather than first doses — affirms, again, the power of ideas and science to solve problems.

When combined with deep compassion and unyielding commitment — to our community and to each other — there is almost no challenge too large, no obstacle too daunting, that we can't overcome.

We see that power and that compassion manifest itself here, now, in this place — in a clinic at Kroger Field that can vaccinate up to 5,000 people a day ... in the recognition that kids and teachers are returning to school because of our efforts ... in the ability and willingness to take hope on the road in creating greater access to transformative care to those most at risk in a community we all share.

Because of you and your work, UK is indispensable to our Commonwealth — the state we were created to serve 156 years ago.

We are not through a dark moment in human history. There will continue to be difficult days ahead as we administer care and do everything we can and must to keep our community healthy and safe.

But we can see the light.

Thank you for being part of a community so willing to step up, so committed to doing our part.

Together, we are helping to shine that light.

Eli Capilouto
President