



Titus Suteh wears full PPE in the isolation area at Jericho Road's Barton Street clinic.

AFTER RECOVERING FROM COVID-19, A MEDICAL PROVIDER RETURNS TO THE FRONTLINES

While Western New York was holding its breath, waiting for COVID-19 to make its official debut in the area, Jericho Road was already enacting plans for dealing with the pandemic. Patients and employees were being screened at the entrances of all three health centers and isolation rooms were set up to keep suspected COVID-19 cases separated.

Titus Suteh, DMSc, MPA-C, a physician assistant originally from Nigeria, was mostly unaffected by the changes. After having his temperature taken at the Barton Street health center entrance each morning, he would make his way to his normal station and prepare to see patients. As the director of and sole provider in Jericho Road's outpatient minor surgery clinic, Suteh was always busy with knee and shoulder injections, lipoma removals, and other procedures, as well as seeing a regular rotation of other patients.

On Friday, March 13, Suteh started to feel rundown. "I had chills, throat irritation, body ache, and runny nose with sinus congestion," he says. "I also had joint pain, aching muscles, and a mild headache. [I felt] extremely tired...I thought that I was having a bad cold."

When Suteh arrived at the clinic on Monday, his temperature check read 101°F.

"I was surprised...[Until then,] the thought that my symptoms could be COVID-19 had not crossed my mind because, at the time...there were not many cases of community spread yet."

Suteh was taken into Jericho Road's isolation area and evaluated by another medical provider in full personal protective equipment. Jericho Road's chief medical officer, Dr. Allana Krolkowski, immediately contacted the Erie County Department of Health and arranged for drive-through testing. By noon, Suteh's test was done and the wait began.

"I went home, told my wife and children that I had a fever and it could possibly be the coronavirus, and immediately began self-isolation...The fear that I could have unknowingly infected my family really set in."

Because Suteh and his wife, a registered nurse, both work in healthcare, they had already discussed a COVID-19 emergency plan for their home. Suteh stayed in the family's living room that was closed off to the rest of the house by a glass door. At 8:30 p.m., the call came from the DOH—Suteh was COVID-19 positive.

"Breaking the news to my wife, son, and daughters that my result was positive and having to explain that I was infected with a [potentially] deadly virus was the most difficult thing I had to do," he recalls. "I promised them that I would fight it. But the fear of the unknown...and the question of whether I would be in the small percentage of patients that don't survive...it was hard."

For Suteh, the first eight days of the illness were the worst, with fever, body aches, night sweats, headache, and loss of taste and smell. On day eight, he developed mild shortness of breath,

cont. on inside

Thank you to our 2019 Crafter Hours sponsors!

Buffalo Business First, Great Clips, Hodgson Russ LLP, Mental Health Advocates of WNY, Quest Diagnostics, Resurgence Brewing Company, Rise Collaborative, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

which was only noticeable when taking a deep breath or going up and down stairs.

"It has been over two decades since I immigrated to the U.S. and I can't remember anytime that I have been really sick since being here," he explains. "I grew up in Nigeria...and the only time that I have been this sick was when I had malaria."

During his 16 days in quarantine, Suteh's wife brought him meals, drinks, and medicine, leaving them at the door to the living room while wearing a mask and gloves. Suteh monitored his own temperature twice a day. He found that taking long hot showers helped a little with his symptoms.

Suteh's children, aged 8, 6, and 5, were worried about their dad. They did their schoolwork in the room adjoining the living room so Suteh could see them through the glass door. They would wave and throw kisses. Their artwork, with encouraging messages, like "Get well soon, Dad!" and "I love you, Dad!" hung on the door to Suteh's quarantine room.

"Seeing my family every day through the glass door boosted my morale...The fact that I was able to see our children gave me a reason to stay positive."

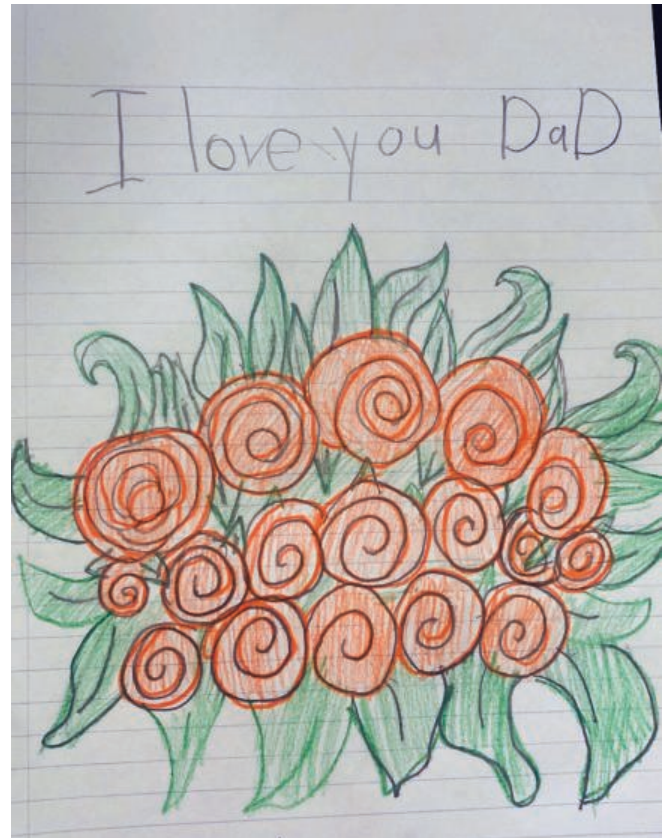
The team at Jericho Road also provided encouragement to their quarantined colleague.

"It is truly a blessing to be part of this organization," Suteh says. "Everyone was quick to rally around my family. Our spiritual care team was phenomenal. Ruth [Strand, director of spiritual care] prayed over the phone with me and did grocery shopping for us. I received countless text and voice messages from Jericho Road staff."

After more than two weeks in quarantine, Suteh was able to rejoin his family and tearfully hug his children and wife.

Now, Suteh is back at work. He sees his usual group of patients, but has also been working in the COVID-19 isolation area at the Barton Street health center. He knows that his experience with the virus makes him uniquely able to counsel others who have fallen ill with COVID-19.

When asked if he has a message to share with the wider community, he says, "I decided to share my story to help curb the fears that come with this virus. The truth is that the sickest patients can die; however, the majority



of people will have mild symptoms and make a full recovery without any complications. This is truly an extraordinary time, but it is important that we remain calm. Please take social distancing and the stay at home order seriously."

THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 BRIDGING THE GAP SPONSORS!



Preparing for the Pandemic at our Global Health Sites

Though the coronavirus can infect all people regardless of nationality or socioeconomic background, the suffering it causes will be greatest for the poorest who have the most limited access to healthcare. That's why Jericho Road remains strongly committed to providing medical care at our global health centers throughout this pandemic. Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nepal have fully or partially closed their borders and have instituted lockdowns to limit the virus's spread. The staff at each of our clinics are screening all patients and have implemented strict infection control processes. When the virus comes to our global clinics' doors, we will be ready. During this time of crisis and beyond, our dedicated staff will continue to care for our global brothers and sisters who need it most.

Meet 4-year-old Alice from Sierra Leone

This is Alice. She is four years old and loves to sing. Alice has cerebral palsy, which makes her right arm and leg floppy. Still, she is able to go to school with the support of her family. Her grandmother, Hannah, brought her to Adama Martha Memorial Community Health Center, Jericho Road's clinic in Kono District, Sierra Leone, to receive treatment for typhoid. Before the clinic opened, Hannah had to travel far for medical care and she would worry when family members like Alice became ill. Now Hannah is grateful there is a place they can go to receive care. To the supporters of Jericho Road's global work, she gives thanks "for the good work they've done



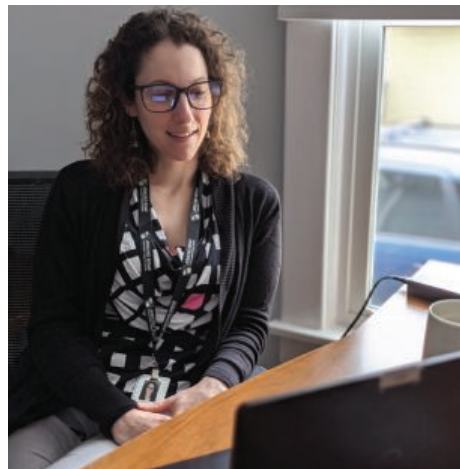
Alice, a patient at Adama Martha Memorial Community Health Center in Kono District, Sierra Leone

for me. May God increase them and bless them."

Behavioral Health Team Helps Patients and Staff Weather the Crisis

As we learn how to navigate the new realities of life amid a global pandemic and the uncertainty that it brings, there has been increased focus on caring for our mental and emotional well-being alongside our physical health. While we wash our hands, wear masks, and practice social distancing, we are also encouraged to attend to the feelings of stress, anxiety, and tension that inevitably arise as we try to adapt to our rapidly changing situation.

Jericho Road's behavioral health team has been steadfastly supporting the community throughout this crisis. According to Director of Behavioral Health Amanda Budwine, this period presents new challenges but simultaneously makes way for new possibilities. Budwine and her team have continued to meet with patients for in-person appointments, but have also begun offering telemedicine as an option to meet remotely. Telemedicine



Director of Behavioral Health Amanda Budwine interacts with a patient in a telemedicine appointment.

allows providers to maintain continuity with patients, but it can sometimes be challenging to deliver intensive trauma counseling when there is limited privacy for patients who share space with family.

"At times we have to work harder to make sure people are in a conducive environment for trauma counseling," Budwine says. "But for many, we are able to keep momentum and traction going."

The team has seen an increase in anxiety, addiction issues, and domestic violence reported by patients. They continue to work closely with Jericho Road's medical providers to connect patients to the behavioral health support they need by making direct referrals and scheduling same-day appointments for focused, solution-based sessions.

"We're getting pulled in a lot of new directions," says Budwine, but the team is rising to the occasion. When they recognized an urgent need for mental health support at Vive, Jericho Road's shelter for asylum seekers, the team formed two groups—one to support
cont. on back



JERICHO ROAD

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

184 Barton Street, Buffalo, NY 14213



**Bridging the Gap is going virtual this year!
Mark your calendar for Friday, August 7
and keep your eye on your email for more
information about our annual global
fundraiser.**

If you'd like to be removed from our mailing list please email us at contact@jrhc.org or call us at 716-348-3000 ext. 417.

clients and the other to support staff. The client-focused group provided virtual sessions on sleep hygiene, coping mechanisms, and yoga, all with Spanish, French, and Portuguese language interpretation.

The team has also been supporting Jericho Road staff, many of whom are healthcare workers on the frontlines who have stretched themselves thin containing the outbreak and treating infected patients. Therapists have hosted virtual hangouts on a variety of topics, from mindful stretching to psychoeducation about trauma's effects on the body. The team also forms the pep squad of Jericho Road's Feel Good Friday sessions, when staff take a break to dance to the same song and share videos of themselves, their families, and their pets dancing to the music. Feel Good Fridays have become a joyful way to let loose and celebrate the blessings of life, together and apart. With each offering, the behavioral team extends support via a colleague-to-colleague approach in a way that uplifts and bolsters the crucial work being done across the organization.

"We're all getting triggered now," Budwine says, "but there are things we can do to help manage and cope." She recommends deep, slow breathing from the diaphragm; meditation; exercise like yoga, dancing, or any movement to counter the stagnation of being at home; sticking to routines like consistent wake up and bedtimes; spiritual practices like prayer; and laughing and doing silly things, which can reduce stress hormones and improve mood.

"The most important thing is to extend grace to yourself and others," says Budwine. "This is hard, no matter who you are. Lower your expectations. Validate that this is difficult and allow yourself to feel those emotions. Know that they will pass."



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Sharon Danna
Jericho Road donor

In this time of COVID-19 with all its tragedy and suffering, the best has been brought out of our community with people helping each other. Although I struggled with poverty during my childhood, I have been touched by God's grace in my adulthood. In the Bible it says, "For to whom much is given, much is expected." I believe in paying it forward. Jericho Road is a blessing in our community with its loving staff who heal the hearts, bodies, and souls of their patients. In turn, it is my blessing to be able to donate.