

Dear members and friends of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology,

This is Mary Beth Fasano, current President of the Academy, and thanks for listening in on today's brief video chat. Over the past week, we have continued to see an aggressive escalation in the number of individuals infected with COVID-19 that has taxed our healthcare systems and challenged our physical and emotional resolve, but we will stand together. Our Academy's COVID-19 Response Task Force is continuing to provide updates via blast emails once to twice a week, as well as regular postings on our COVID-19 resources page.

Recently, the team has addressed some questions related to testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, including some information on the RT-PCR test which amplifies the viral RNA, and provides a qualitative detection, and some discussion on the newer emerging serologic or antibody tests that are now becoming available for viral screening. There have also been questions posed regarding controversy as to whether asthma serves as a risk factor for severe COVID-19 disease or not. So, I'd encourage you to go to our special resources section (<https://education.aaaai.org/resources-for-a-i-clinicians/covid-19>) for more information on those two items, as well as other updates regarding the pandemic. And don't hesitate to continue to send your questions to the COVID-19 Response Task Force at practicematters@aaaai.org.

Finally, I wanted to take just a moment and share with you some sad news for our Academy as well as for our entire allergy community. Late last month, we lost a member of our Academy Board of Directors. Dr. Chitra Dinakar passed away on March 27 following a courageous battle with cancer. Chitra was an incredibly passionate and talented clinician and educator with a resilient spirit that touched all of our lives. She will be missed.

I also wanted to let you know that Dr. Kevin Kelly will be assuming position on the Academy Board of Directors to complete Dr. Dinakar's term of service. Actually Dr. Kelly has a unique relationship with Dr. Dinakar. He was Chair of Pediatrics at Children's Mercy in Kansas City at a time when Chitra was junior faculty in allergy/immunology. So, we thank Dr. Kelly for his honoring of Dr. Dinakar and his ongoing service to the Academy.

Finally, please stay healthy, stay safe, take care and thank you for continuing to provide care to our patients with allergic and immunologic disorders. Thanks.