

FEATURES

Neighborhood Heroes: Mike Merjanian, Emergency Medicine Physician



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by Men's Journal editors



Michael Merjanian, Emergency Medicine Physician

Name: Michael Merjanian

Title: Emergency Medicine Physician

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Years on the Job: 5

MJ: How has your work changed in the last two weeks?

Michael Merjanian: The last two weeks has been a lot about preparation. I work in California where we have had many cases of COVID-19, but luckily not to the same extent as New York or Italy. So, the past two weeks have been focused on preparation. We have been doing drills on how to gown-up and wear protective equipment. Our shifts have also been more stressful. Not knowing which patient will expose us to a virus. Constantly trying to learn about new treatments or new characteristics about that virus.

What's the greatest challenge at hand right now?

The greatest challenge is educating and motivating the public to following the recommendations of social distancing and isolating, as well as preparing the emergency departments for a potential surge of patients.

Do you feel at-risk/threatened?

I feel more vulnerable than normal, but I also feel prepared. Our hospitals have stepped up and secured more equipment (such as masks and gowns). In California we have had time to respond to what happened in New York, so I do feel more prepared. But yes, the risk of being exposed to the virus, getting sick, being put into quarantine and not receiving paychecks because of it does weigh heavily.

Do you see any signs of hope?

I think people are understanding the importance of staying home. We have had some slowing of new cases and deaths in California. It is way too soon to make any predictions, but there is hope that California won't become the next New York or Italy.

Should people still be working?

People should be staying home. If you can work from home, that's great. If your job is classified as an essential job then please be careful, take precautions. We have a motto in the ER during times like this: "There is no emergency in a pandemic." This means take your time, prepare, make sure your mask is on. Do not rush into a situation unprepared. You have to take care of yourself first.

How can folks help right now?

There are a lot of ways people can help. The most important is to help stop the virus by following local guideline on social isolation. You can also help by not buying medical-grade supplies. This allows hospitals to buy them for the healthcare workers. Please, donate any medical-grade supplies to your local hospitals.

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