

## LIVING WITH COVID-19 IN OUR MIDST

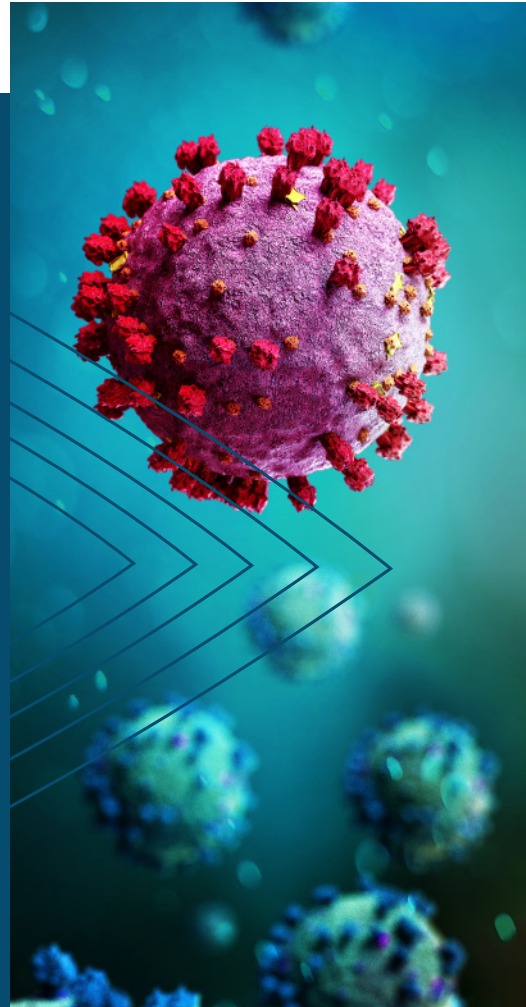
December 2019 saw the first reported case of COVID-19. The world has changed in a myriad of ways since that date, as a global pandemic was declared not long after. Countries around the world have seen differing responses and effects. As time has passed the discourse about stopping the pandemic has shifted to how to manage our lives with a new endemic virus. Vaccines have emerged and have proven to provide a level of protection, but even that is incomplete.

The impacts of this pandemic have been significant, from those effected by the illness, those treating and caring for the sick, the cost of care, the impacts of government programs implemented to stop or slow the spread down to the financial impacts on many businesses. The overall costs of this pandemic may never truly be understood.

One thing that we can get a good grasp around is the cost of care for individual patients. FAIR Health produced data showing the state-by-state costs of COVID care<sup>1</sup>. Using the state of Utah as a relatively low-cost region of the country, this data shows that keeping a patient out of the hospital saves a plan over \$35,000 on average, while preventing a patient from becoming a complex inpatient would save over \$90,000. Early intervention and treatment can certainly help in reducing the risk for patients, but these interventions need to happen prior to hospitalization.

Hines has developed a specific protocol to help manage these cases. Members are provided access to a Wellness Portal, which allows them to take a comprehensive health risk assessment and every member receives access to informative educational materials focused on minimizing their COVID risks. If the risk assessment shows the member to have a risk of becoming a complex COVID case, they are instructed to contact Hines to initiate nurse case management assistance. Our nurses have been trained on our Hines protocol to initiate access to early treatment and avoid these high-cost stays.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 is with us for the long run. Fortunately, there are things that you can do to reduce the impacts. If we can avoid one of your members becoming yet another COVID admission, ICU case or worse, we will have done our job. To learn more about accessing the Wellness Portal, the educational materials available, or if you simply have any questions, please give us a call.



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# COVID Education Program