



# ***Nurses on the Pandemic Front-line***

## ***Crushing demands and stress***

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# *Lassa Fever – University Hospital 2015*

What happens when the system  
dissolves.....



# ***What the research tells us about stress and healthcare personnel during Infectious Disease Outbreaks***

“working in high-risk environments”  
– the SARS experience

- Associated with poor mental health outcomes
- Reported more stress and avoidance
- Higher level of posttraumatic stress
- More sleep disorders, fatigue
- Anxiety and depression post SARS



Brooks S et al. A Systematic, Thematic Review of Social and Occupational Factors Associated with Psychological Outcomes in Healthcare Employees During an Infectious Disease Outbreak. *JOEM*. 2018; 60: 248-257

# ***AFT Nurses on the COVID-19 frontline King County, Washington***

- Switch in CDC guidance on respiratory protection to allow use of face masks (not N-95's) during the care of COVID-19 patients
- No communication about availability of all PPE supplies –running low on everything – face masks, gowns, etc.
- No promotion of respiratory protection alternatives such as PAPR's when N-95's are not available
- Arbitrary quarantining of nurses during early days of outbreak during exposure to positive patients from Life Care





# *What they report.....*

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Fatigue
- Hyper-vigilance
- Distress about potential family member exposure
- Lack of trust in their facilities



# *They suffer, the system suffers*

**NURSES NEED:**

**GUARANTEE OF PPE**

**TRAINING** – CLINICAL AND  
BEYOND (INCLUDING STRESS  
RECOGNITION AND RESILIENCE)

UP-FRONT **COMMUNICATION**  
AND **TRANSPARENCY**

*ALL ESSENTIAL TO FUNCTION IN  
THIS DEMANDING PANDEMIC*

