

## Preface

Recently I listened to a prepandemic lecture talking about health-care heroism. The speaker said it was easy to find heroes in a crisis, but the real test of character was whether someone could be a friend through thick and thin, not to mention over very long hauls. Friends try to keep us from getting sick in the first place, stay with us when we are, and hold our hands as we make a journey to either recovery or the end of our lives.

Enthusiasm for “Heroes Work Here” signs outside hospitals waxed and waned as the pandemic’s infectious waves rose and fell. We are all tired, none more so than those who went from heroes to scapegoats in public opinion. So I say the people who write of their experiences in this book, who share their expertise to explain what happened before and during the pandemic—not to mention what will likely come after—are not heroes, but something even more valuable and enduring. They are friends of humanity.

—*Wendy Welch*