

## Heroes Beyond the Mask

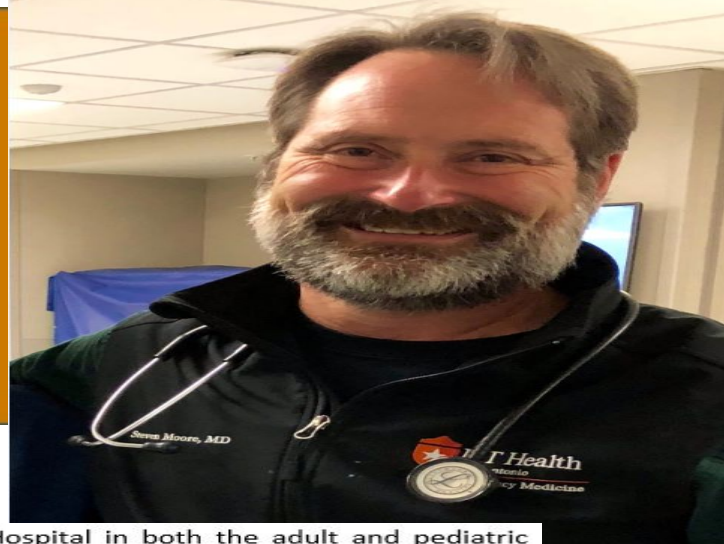
# Dr. Steve Moore “Atomic Falcon”



I am an ER physician, assistant professor, medical director for Wimberley EMS, wilderness medicine instructor, husband, and

*“I’m proud of our ER team. There is a lot courage. This is what we do. We live for this.”*

*– Dr. Moore*



I work in the Emergency Department at University Hospital in both the adult and pediatric emergency rooms. I’m proud of our ER team. This what we do – we live for this. We gown up and take care of our suspected COVID patients, from swabbing them in triage to intubating the sicker patients in our isolation rooms. ER people have each other’s backs and everyone steps up for their teammates, knowing the risks to themselves and their families. One moment that stands out to me is when we were treating a high-risk patient in a room, and none of the nurses, techs, or other providers wanted to be the first to leave because they didn’t want to leave their co-workers alone. There is a lot of courage in the ER and it is inspiring to see people “embrace the suck.” Humanity, of late, has inspired me – I really think of humanity as my tribe, and my people, right now, are doing amazing things every day. I am also touched by the patients we take care of – they have these incredible life stories and even though they may be having a really hard time, they find ways to stay positive and keep going.

I am also inspired by and grateful for my family. Due to COVID, my wife and I are spending more time with our children, eating at home a lot more, playing more board games, doing more chores around the house, planting flowers and a garden – things we haven’t had the time to do in a long time. It’s nice to hit the pause button on the kids’ activities and be more domestic. While in the initial weeks of all of this there was some fear and stress, we have gotten over it and more used to how things are now. I think between my job and what my wife does, the kids are aware of happenings in the world. My wife and I lived in New York City during 9/11, and our kids know those stories. Our feeling has been we have no choice but to be OK and things will be OK. I have so much to be grateful for. I am grateful for our health, having a job, getting to do the work I love every day and the time with my family. I can’t remember feeling as grateful as I do right now.

Even during this time, and although I sleep in a separate room right now, we are still staying connected. My family is here and my mother and mother-in-law both live less than 10 minutes away. They’re elderly and although we don’t get to see them as much now, we still get to drop off food and wave. I live in a small town and you can still see everyone at the grocery store. So many people in my community have stepped up during this time. We have distilleries making alcohol for everyone to clean with, smaller businesses are doing take out and giving out rolls of toilet paper and PPE, the EMS agencies in Hays county are working together and sharing resources, people are sewing masks for one another, people are putting ribbons and hearts on the bridge in town for first responders and health care providers, and local camps are donating rooms for family members and first responders. In the ER, people are taking on extra shifts to cover for those that can’t come to work. It’s all been really nice to see. This thing has brought people together. Everyone wants to be useful and do their part. Although this hasn’t been exactly great, we have been very lucky and there has been a lot of good that has come from this.

Post-Covid, I really hope that everyone who has been affected by all of this can get back on their feet quickly and rebuild their lives. I am also hopeful that these new connections people are making now, because of the pandemic, stick around for a while. Now is the time to look for the good in people, stay connected, and remember we’re all doing the best we can. It has to be OK. We don’t have any other choice.