

I celebrate Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the Iraqi American pediatrician from Flint, Michigan, who spearheaded efforts to publicize and address the water crisis in Flint. Says in her book *What the Eyes Don't See*, “this is a story of resistance, activism, of citizen reaction, of waking up and opening your eyes and making a difference in our community. I wrote this book to share the incredible work we did, hand in hand with our community, to make our community care about our children”. The tragedy for Flint children began when the state took over the city’s finances to save money, they switched the water system from the Great Lakes to the Flint River, without protections from corrosion. Toxics had been getting into the Flint River throughout its industrial history. So lead soon began leaching into the water and poisoning the young patients in her care. She began documenting the problem through their medical records. But federal and state officials refused to investigate or believe her data or the stories of her patient’s families. Finally, after she and the community sounded the alarm to the press, the water was switched back to the Great Lakes. She now runs the Pediatric Public Health Initiative to work with many partners and the heroic parents of Flint to mitigate the impact of this crisis.

Flint residents are now under curfew for Covid-19 and are likely to suffer disproportionately because of all the health stresses they have already endured. Yesterday Dr. Mona tested positive for Covid-19. She tweeted. “I'm doing fine. If you are recovering, consider donating your plasma. I just signed up.”

- Marcia Hams