Wisconsin Physician Leaders: Vaccination is Key to Moving Past COVID-19

The following important message on COVID-19 vaccinations is made on behalf of physician chief medical officers of Wisconsin health systems and hospitals.

May 06, 2021

COVID-19 has been with us now for more than a year. We’ve been through a lot together—illness, death, economic hardship and the disruption of the lives we cherish, including the close personal interactions that we as humans need to thrive. And while we’ve shown collective resolve in fighting the disease and adapting to its threat, what we all really crave is getting back to the people and things we miss. Vaccines offer us precisely that hope.

As physicians and health care providers, we’ve devoted our lives to caring for others. It is our responsibility to review medical studies and weigh risks and benefits to recommend the best treatments to protect the health of our patients. Based on our medical training and judgement, we believe the science and safety behind the COVID-19 vaccines is sound, and we encourage our patients and others to get a COVID vaccine whenever and wherever available in your community.

The dramatic rise of COVID cases in Wisconsin in late 2020 posed many threats to our state and its people. Wisconsinites responded appropriately by adopting recommended mitigation behaviors—wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands—and successfully reversed the COVID surge. And yet, COVID remains with us, stubbornly so. Vaccination offers us the best chance to continue reducing COVID’s grip on our daily lives.

Our voices, we hope, will provide encouragement to anyone who has questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. Important, too, are the perspectives of those you know, love and trust who have sought and safely received a COVID-19 vaccine. Why did they do so? What future are they looking forward to now that they are protected against contracting or being severely sickened by COVID? We hope you will join them and us on this path back to the activities and togetherness we long for.

Christopher G Green, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Wisconsin Hospital Association

Gary Stuck, DO, FAAFP
Chief Medical Officer
 Advocate Aurora Health

John Misa, MD
Interim Chief Medical Officer
Allina Health System

Gregory Brusko, DO, MMM, FACOS
Chief Clinical Officer
Ascension Wisconsin

Ryan Andrews, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Aspirus Wausau Hospital

Brian Johnson, MD, FACP
Chief Medical Officer
Aurora BayCare Medical Center

Cynthia Lasecki, MD, FAAFP
Chief Medical Officer
Bellin Health System

Roger Kapoor, MD
Senior Vice President
Beloit Health System

Esteban Miller, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Black River Memorial Hospital, Inc.

Blaise P Vitale
Family Physician
Burnett Medical Center

Michael Gutzeit, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Children’s Wisconsin - Milwaukee Hospital

James Heise, MD, MBA
CMO
Door County Medical Center

Bill Cannon
Medical Director Fort Medical Group
Fort HealthCare

Jonathon D. Truwit, MD
Enterprise CMO and Sr. Admin. Dean
Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin - Froedtert Hospital

Robyn Borge, MD
Chief of Medical/Clinical Staff
Gundersen Health System

Edgar (Ted) Collison
Chief Physician Executive
HSHS Wisconsin

William Melms, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Marshfield Clinic Health System
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Krien, MD</td>
<td>Regional Chair of Practice</td>
<td>Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Helmers, MD</td>
<td>Regional Vice President</td>
<td>Mayo Clinic Health System - Northwest Wisconsin Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Bjelland, DO</td>
<td>VP/CMO</td>
<td>Mile Bluff Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Gouthro, MD</td>
<td>Chief Medical Officer</td>
<td>North Central Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Niesen, MD</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Prairie Ridge Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Baker, DPM</td>
<td>Chief Medical Officer</td>
<td>Reedsburg Area Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Halverson, MD</td>
<td>Chief Medical Officer</td>
<td>Rogers Memorial Hospital, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Kramer, MD</td>
<td>Vice President of Medical Affairs</td>
<td>Southwest Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Van Etten, MD</td>
<td>Medical Director/Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Spooner Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Franta, MD</td>
<td>SSM Health Regional CMO</td>
<td>SSM Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Schwaab, MD</td>
<td>General Surgeon and Chief Medical Officer</td>
<td>Stoughton Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Cockley, MD</td>
<td>Chief Clinical Officer</td>
<td>ThedaCare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Cavaness, MD</td>
<td>President, Tomah Health Medical Staff</td>
<td>Tomah Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Wetzel, MD</td>
<td>Chief Medical Officer</td>
<td>UnityPoint Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimee Becker, MD</td>
<td>Chief Medical Officer</td>
<td>University Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Fox, MD</td>
<td>VP-Medical Services Primary Care</td>
<td>Upland Hills Health, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Lawrence, MD</td>
<td>Orthopaedic Surgeon/Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Vernon Memorial Healthcare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>