

## 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.*

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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.

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