



ADVOCATE. ADVANCE. LEAD.

5510 Research Park Drive
P.O. Box 259038
Madison, WI 53725-9038
608.274.1820 | FAX 608.274.8554 | www.wha.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kelly Lietz
klietz@wha.org | 608.268.1845

Note to editors and reporters: If you would like to be put in touch with a physician leader in your area for further comment on the topic of vaccines, please contact Kelly Lietz at the number/email above.

State Physician Leaders Urge Vaccination Against COVID-19

Madison, Wis., May 6, 2021—Wisconsin health system and hospital physician leaders from across the state are encouraging all eligible Wisconsinites to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. In a letter sent today, 34 signatories—who represent a combined 111 hospitals statewide—draw from shared experiences and scientific evidence to promote vaccination as the key to Wisconsin moving past the COVID-19 pandemic.

“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 physician leaders wrote.

An online version of this letter is available [here](#).

###

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.

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

Bill Cannon
Medical Director Fort Medical Group
Fort HealthCare

Edgar (Ted) Collison
Chief Physician Executive
SHS Wisconsin

Richard Helmers, MD
Regional Vice President
Mayo Clinic Health System -
Northwest Wisconsin Region

Matthew Niesen, MD
Chief of Staff
Prairie Ridge Health

Kent Kramer, MD
Vice President of Medical Affairs
Southwest Health

Aaron Schwaab, MD, FACS
General Surgeon and Chief Medical
Officer
Stoughton Health

Pam Wetzel, MD
Chief Medical Officer
UnityPoint Health

Jeffrey Lawrence, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon/Chief of Staff
Vernon Memorial Healthcare

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

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

William Melms, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Marshfield Clinic Health System

Tim Bjelland, DO
VP/CMO
Mile Bluff Medical Center

Elizabeth Baker, DPM
Chief Medical Officer
Reedsburg Area Medical Center

Mark Van Etten, MD
Medical Director/Chief of Staff
Spooner Health

Mark Cockley, MD
Chief Clinical Officer
ThedaCare

Aimee Becker, MD, MBA
Chief Medical Officer
University Hospital

James Heise, MD, MBA
CMO
Door County Medical Center

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

Joseph Krien, MD
Regional Chair of Practice
Mayo Clinic Health System -
Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse

Robert Gouthro, MD
Chief Medical Officer
North Central Health Care

**Jerry Halverson, MD, FACP, FACC,
DFAPA**
Chief Medical Officer
Rogers Memorial Hospital, Inc.

Amy Franta, MD
SSM Health Regional CMO
SSM Health

Jeffrey Cavaness, MD
President, Tomah Health Medical
Staff
Tomah Health

Sara Fox, MD
VP-Medical Services Primary Care
Upland Hills Health, Inc.