

A Statement to Delawareans. The following is made on behalf of Chief Medical Officers and Chief Nursing Officers of Delaware Hospitals and Health Systems.

As the physician and nurse leaders of hospitals and healthcare systems throughout the State of Delaware, representing all of Delaware's general acute care and pediatric hospitals, we have an important safety message regarding COVID-19.

The hospitals and healthcare systems across the state are united in supporting policies and interventions that will fight the spread of COVID-19. It is imperative that every Delaware resident join us in taking the necessary steps to prevent the spread of this deadly virus.

We ask that everyone take these precautions: **Wear a mask. Stay at least 6 feet apart. Avoid crowds and gatherings, large and small. And wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.**

Our hospitals and healthcare facilities continue to require staff, patients and visitors to follow public safety protocols, including mask-wearing, screenings upon entry to our facilities, and limitation of visitors. We do this to keep our patients, visitors and healthcare workers safe.

In recent weeks, we have seen COVID-19 cases trending upwards in all areas of the state, and hospitalizations have increased. In some parts of the country, hospitals are being pushed to the limits of their capacity. While our Delaware healthcare system is well prepared, it is vitally important that everyone work together to reduce the spread of COVID-19 so that we can prevent the kinds of challenges being experienced elsewhere in the nation.

We urge everyone to take the recommendations of our public health officials seriously and to follow the guidelines. The State of Delaware has been a strong partner in our efforts to keep people healthy during this pandemic, and the safety measures that the state has put into place are

driven by data and guidance from healthcare experts. These measures are designed to combat this disease, reduce its spread, and keep people healthy and safe until we can achieve widespread protection from COVID-19 through vaccination.

There has been recent and encouraging news about a potential vaccine and more effective treatments for this virus. While we look forward to a vaccine, we recognize that even after it becomes available, it will take time for our population to become protected from the virus. The steps that we take today to be safe will save lives. **Winter months are historically high viral infection periods, and with cold weather forcing more people indoors, it is imperative that personal practices to prevent the spread of the virus continue.**

It is absolutely critical that all Delawareans view themselves as partners in the effort to keep each other safe and alive. Help keep COVID-19 under control by doing what you can to prevent more illness and hospitalization. Support our dedicated and courageous healthcare staff as they continue the fight against COVID-19 for those patients who have the misfortune of becoming ill during the pandemic. Celebrate the upcoming holidays safely and help ensure that you and your loved ones stay healthy!

Together we can get to where we want to be: keeping this dangerous virus under control.

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