



November 19, 2020

An open letter to the American people:

With Thanksgiving and the holiday season fast approaching and a deadly COVID-19 pandemic surging, we – the physicians, nurses, hospital and health system leaders and public health professionals on the front lines of this pandemic – strongly urge everyone throughout our country to celebrate responsibly, in a scaled-back fashion that limits the virus’s spread, to help reduce the risk of infecting friends, family and others you love.

Throughout the pandemic, COVID-19 spread has followed a similar pattern around holidays and mass gatherings. Positive cases spiked after Memorial Day, after the Fourth of July, after Labor Day, and now – two weeks after Halloween. The record-shattering surge underway is resulting in uncontrolled community spread and infection that has already overburdened health systems in some areas and will ultimately consume capacity of our health care system and may reduce the availability of care in many places in our country.

In the strongest possible terms, we urge you to celebrate responsibly. We are all weary and empathize with the desire to celebrate the holidays with family and friends, but given the serious risks, we underscore how important it is to wear masks, maintain physical distancing and wash your hands. Following these science-based, commonsense measures is the best way to prevent our health care systems and dedicated health care professionals from being overwhelmed by critically ill patients. We must protect the doctors, nurses and other caregivers who have tirelessly battled this virus for months. You can do your part to ensure they can continue to care for you and your loved ones.

We will get through this pandemic, but the only way out is to follow the science and adhere to the public health steps we know work.

In health,

American Hospital Association
American Medical Association
American Nurses Association