

HASC Media Statement

Hospitals Support Adherence to Public Health Safety Precautions

Our hospitals and frontline health care workers are stretched to the limit, working tirelessly and selflessly for nearly a year to care for those battling COVID-19. This pandemic is once again surging and is expected to be worse than ever at a time when supplies remain hard to come by, and when hospital workers are physically and mentally drained.

We're now facing a nationwide shortage of nurses during the most critical phase of the worst public health crisis in recent history. Hospitals have implemented strategies like team nursing models to effectively care for a cohort of patients, but with the trajectory of the current surge, this burden will undoubtedly intensify.

More than ever, hospitals are working together to share lessons learned and best practices. Since the outset of the pandemic, hospitals have also been collaborating with public health departments, EMS providers, county and state officials, and community stakeholders to effectively care for populations with a regional team approach.

There is typically a two-week lag between "spreader" events and hospitalizations, so the Thanksgiving holiday will likely bring an even larger spike in the need for hospital care over the next month. The Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's holidays that follow will mean little respite for weary health care workers and all other hospital staff.

As we approach the point when a vaccine will be available and can begin turning the page on this virus, it's critical that all Southern California residents follow the science-based safety guidelines of our public health officials. We know this is hard for everyone: it's hard for businesses; it's hard for employees; it's hard for nurses and doctors and hospital support staff.

However, it's absolutely hardest on the families who face an empty chair at the dinner table this holiday season.

Southern California hospitals implore all of us to do our part: to practice social distancing, limit gatherings, wear masks, and respect the guidance of public health leaders.

By doing so, you are saving lives, and from the perspective of hospitals, you're helping our teams be there for their families at this special time of year – and into the new year as well.

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CONTACT: Adam Blackstone
(323) 447-0864 – Cell