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Health Care Groups Plea for Idahoans to Help Fight COVID-19

Nearly 30 Idaho health care groups release a joint letter to sound an alarm and ask for help

BOISE, ID – As Idaho ICUs fill to capacity, 29 health care groups — representing thousands of health care providers — have released a joint letter to ask Idahoans for their assistance to combat the current COVID-19 surge.

In this statewide call for help, the groups explain the suffering they are witnessing in health care facilities and how contagious the Delta variant is in Idaho communities. “The facts are alarming. The Delta variant is dangerously contagious. It is more contagious than the common cold, seasonal flu, or Ebola. On average, people infected with the Delta variant will spread the infection to 5 to 8 other people,” the letter states.

These major health care groups — including physicians, nurses, hospitals, and many more — released the letter as they witness alarming situations in Idaho health care facilities. “As of Aug. 31, approximately 543 patients in Idaho were hospitalized with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 and 167 of those patients were in the ICU with confirmed COVID-19. Perhaps most discouraging is the fact that approximately 97 COVID-19 patients in Idaho were on a ventilator, the highest recorded number at any time during this pandemic,” the providers explain in the letter.

The letter also sounds an alarm that the worst is yet to come in Idaho. The health care groups warn of an even higher surge soon as children start school and the Delta variant rages on. The letter cautions, “Models indicate that by mid-October, Idaho could see 30,000 cases per week which is thousands more than any week in 2020. Discussions surrounding the activation of crisis standards of care are underway, which means hospitals may be forced to ration care.”

The health care providers ask Idahoans to choose to take action and help stop the spread of this highly contagious variant. “What can you do? First, get the vaccine. More than 200 million Americans have safely and effectively been vaccinated for COVID-19. In fact, just last week, the Pfizer vaccine received full approval from the FDA after rigorous evaluations showed it met the very high standards we have in this country,” the groups write.

The letter highlights that 95.8 percent of hospitalized patients are unvaccinated in Idaho. The providers also ask Idahoans to practice basic public health measures like consistently wearing a mask in indoor settings and crowded outdoor settings.

Idaho Medical Association, alongside the nearly 30 other co-signers of this letter, call on Idahoans to choose to get vaccinated and wear masks. Now is the time to choose to protect ourselves, our families and our neighbors from COVID-19.

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Idaho Medical Association is the leading organization representing physicians in all specialties, practice settings and geographic locations in Idaho. With more than 3,500 members, Idaho Medical Association is recognized as the voice of medicine in Idaho. The organization strives to unify and advocate for all Idaho physicians, promote the art and science of medicine and remain dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all Idahoans.