

October 13, 2020

An open letter to our elected officials and the community:

As we continue our work to protect and care for the citizens of our communities during COVID-19, we pledge our support to the elected and appointed officials of our region in their use of proven public health strategies to fight this pandemic.

All of us who have signed this letter represent rural health care organizations and believe it is vital that we protect our resources to ensure we can meet the ongoing health care needs of those with COVID-19 and other medical conditions and needs. It is important that we have enough beds available to care for anyone who needs hospital care. It is also important that we maintain the health and well-being of our staff, who care for the people in those beds, and their families. With continued increasing community spread in Wisconsin, this becomes much harder.

As we enter the eighth month of managing COVID-19 in our communities, we know people are experiencing “caution fatigue” and may not be as diligent about taking simple steps to help reduce the spread of the virus. It gets easier to ignore the warnings and wonder if our individual behaviors make a difference in preventing infection and spread. And yet, after months of fighting this pandemic, we know what works to curb the spread and what will lessen the burden of this virus in our community.

Research and data from numerous studies around the world help us to make informed decisions about the best tools to slow the spread of COVID-19 while we work toward a vaccine and more effective treatments. These include:

1. Keeping a distance of greater than 6 feet from people outside your household;
2. Wearing masks when outside your home and around other people;
3. Avoiding any gatherings, including family events, where physical distancing and masking are not strictly being practiced;
4. Staying home when not feeling well;
5. Abiding by a 14-day isolation after contact with someone who has COVID-19;
6. Washing hands frequently – especially after touching shared surfaces, before touching your face, before eating and drinking, and upon leaving a public area.

As health care organizations, we respect scientists and public health experts. We know that this pandemic is a public health crisis and should be approached using the data-driven information that these experts provide. And so, we ask you to promote and encourage these six behaviors in our communities. If we all work together to commit to and support accountability to these simple measures, it will help to assure the future viability of our local businesses, the education of our children, and the provision of medical care to everyone in our part of Wisconsin.

Respectfully,

The leadership of Hospitals and Clinics serving Western Wisconsin
Signatures on following page



Matt Brandt, CEO
Hudson Physicians



Tom Borowski, President
Hudson Hospital and Clinics



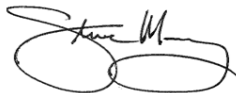
David Dobosenski, CEO
St. Croix Regional Medical Center



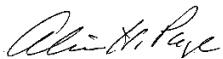
Matt Forge, CEO
Osceola Medical Center



Dr. Keri Lijewski, Medical Director
Vibrant Health Family Clinics



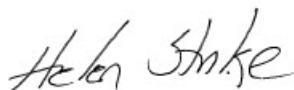
Steve Massey, President and CEO
Westfields Hospital and Clinic



Alison H. Page, CEO
Western Wisconsin Health



Deb Rudquist, President
Amery Hospital and Clinics



Helen Strike, President
River Falls Area Hospital

The following pages are the names of other organizations and clinicians who support this letter.

Christopher Anderson, Pharm.D., LP

Dr. Douglas MD MBA

Beverly Green, MSN, LP

Christine Cleary CNM

Russell Peltz MD

Pat Oahly M.D.

Tracy Brown MD

Ruth Castles PA-C

Emily Hays NP

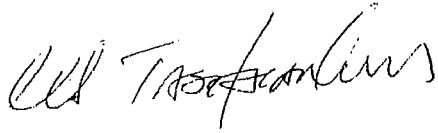
Stindersen, NP

DM, DPM

Elizabeth

Paul MD

The following pages are the names of other organizations and clinicians who support this letter.



CH TASHTJIAN, MD


Greg Miller M.D.



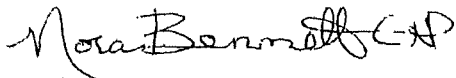
Greg Miller, MD

David Wilhelm, M.D.


Greg Goblirsch MD



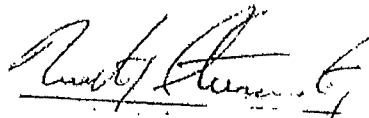
Benjamin Morgan, MD



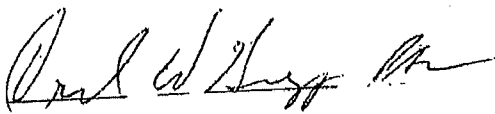
Nora Bennett, C-NP



Kurt Helmrick PA



Tim Steinmetz MD



David Gregg, PAC