



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2021

Physicians Encourage Masking and Vaccination of Students

Statement by Texas Medical Association (TMA) President E. Linda Villarreal, MD; Texas Pediatric Society (TPS) President Seth D. Kaplan, MD; and Texas Public Health Coalition (TPHC) Chair Jason V. Terk, MD, as Texans plan for kids to return to school. The physician and health care groups are calling for children to be protected from COVID-19 due to spikes in cases and hospitalizations from the COVID-19 delta variant. They recommend parents and families follow new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for masking everyone in schools, grades K-12 – regardless of vaccination status – and to vaccinate all children aged 12 and up who can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, to protect them and their families.

“As students head back to school this fall, physicians urge Texans to take steps to safeguard children from surging COVID-19 infections. We must defend children by vaccinating those aged 12 and up who can receive the COVID-19 shot, and by urging mask-wearing for everyone in schools to protect those who can’t be vaccinated.

“The pandemic has not ended – Governor Greg Abbott renewed Texas’ disaster declaration on July 1 – and we physicians see it’s worsening as COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths increase once again, mostly in unvaccinated Texans.

“Let’s face it; if we don’t take action, the more infectious COVID-19 delta variant will spread among students when they gather together in schools. We urge use of every tool in our toolkit to protect children and their families from COVID-19. Those tools include vaccinating everyone who is eligible and getting all students to wear a mask to prevent spread of disease to others, especially those who cannot get the shot’s defense from the virus.

“We want and need to have our children return to schools where they can learn and thrive. But we must ensure they are safe from disease spread to avoid outbreaks and disruptions that could keep kids out of school.”

The physicians also suggest children are caught up on all vaccinations in preparation for school.

About TMA:

TMA is the largest state medical society in the nation, representing more than 55,000 physician and medical student members. It is located in Austin and has 110 component county medical societies around the state. TMA's key objective since 1853 is to improve the health of all Texans.

About TPS:

TPS, the Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is the premier state professional nonprofit organization of over 4,500 Texas pediatricians and medical students. TPS believes that the most important resource of the State of Texas is its children and pledges its efforts to promote their health and welfare.

About TPHC:

TPHC is a coalition of more than 30 health professional organizations and health-focused organizations dedicated to disease prevention and health promotion. The coalition works to reduce preventable disease by advancing effective public policies that promote a safe and healthy environment and healthy behaviors for all Texas residents.

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