

AMA, AHA, ANA: Open letter on mask use, stopping spread of COVID-19

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An open letter to the American public,

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have urged the American people to protect themselves, their neighbors and their loved ones amidst the worst global health crisis in generations. After months of physical distancing and staying at home, infections and deaths began to decline.

But in the weeks since states began reopening, some of the steps that were critical to the progress we made were too quickly abandoned. And we are now watching in real-time as a dramatic uptick in COVID-19 cases is erasing our hard-won gains. Hospitals in some states are at or nearing their ICU capacity. Shortages of personal protective equipment and testing supplies continue to pose a dire threat to health care workers and patients alike. And last week, Dr. Anthony Fauci told Congress that the U.S could see 100,000 new coronavirus cases each day if we do not take more precautions.

This is why as physicians, nurses, hospital and health system leaders, researchers and public health experts, we are urging the American public to take the simple steps we know will help stop the spread of the virus: wearing a face mask, maintaining physical distancing, and washing hands. We are not powerless in this public health crisis, and we can defeat it in the same way we defeated previous threats to public health—by allowing science and evidence to shape our decisions and inform our actions.

The toll of this pandemic is already staggering, and it will take many more months, perhaps years, to truly understand its impact on our country and our way of life. But what is certain – and what the science and evidence are telling us – is that COVID-19 is not behind us and we must resist confusing re-opening with returning to normalcy. Doing so will escalate this



crisis and result in more suffering and death.

To those of you who are doing your part in helping turn the tide of this pandemic—thank you.

Your actions are critical to stopping the spread of COVID-19. Moving forward, we must all remain vigilant and continue taking steps to mitigate the spread of the virus to protect each other and our loved ones. There is only one way we will get through this— together.

Your continued partners in health,

American Hospital Association

American Medical Association

American Nurses Association