

Unprecedented call to Americans: Stay home to slow COVID-19 spread

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The message being spread across the country is to #StayHome. Social distancing and staying home are at the center of the fight to save lives amid the COVID-19 pandemic because they can help decrease the anticipated spike in cases in the U.S. As the need for physicians and other health professionals remains critical, it is vital that people stay home.

In an unprecedented open letter to the American people, the AMA, American Hospital Association (AHA) and American Nurses Association (ANA) are calling on people to stay at home to help reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus and limit its long-term health effect on the country. “We are honored to serve and put our lives on the front line to protect and save as many lives as possible. But we need your help,” the letter says.

Increasingly, states are moving toward implementing important measures to keep people at home to reduce the spread of COVID-19. There is a growing need for everyone to understand the importance of staying home, which has been seen through pleas from physicians, nurses and other health professionals across the country.

While many people are following recommendations by working from home if they can and canceling trips, others view these precautions as an overreaction. But by eliminating contact with others, staying home and practicing social distancing health care systems can better meet the needs of those who may have COVID-19. Here are some ways these stay-at-home measures can help.

Prevent overwhelmed hospitals

Physicians and other health professionals are in dire need of people to remain at home during this pressing time. When people stay home, it can help prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed with a spike in patients.

“Physical distancing and staying at home are the key to slowing the spread of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to give physicians, nurses and everyone on the front lines a fighting chance at having the equipment, time and resources necessary to take on this immense challenge,” says the letter.

Protect health care professionals

Across social media, physicians, nurses and other health professionals are using the hashtag #StayHome to encourage Americans to slow the spread of COVID-19. There have been photos shared on every social media platform of health care teams that say, “We’ll stay here for you. Stay home for us,” to encourage individuals to remain at home.

In other threads, physicians share what it is like in the emergency department and other parts of the hospital. For example, an emergency physician in New York shared his typical day at the hospital in a Twitter thread, sharing that it can be stressful because of the risk of exposure and the need to protect his family at home. He closes with this potent message: “I survived Ebola. I fear COVID-19. Do your part. Stay home. Stay Safe. And every day I’ll come to work for you.”

Slow the spread of COVID-19

This does not just affect the elderly and those at highest risk. COVID-19 is affecting everyone—families, friends and loved ones.

“That’s why we’re urging the public to #StayHome as we reach the critical stages of our national response to COVID-19,” says the letter.

Staying at home and avoiding contact with others is crucial to slowing the spread of COVID-19. And while millions have been leading this effort to stay home, “millions more must join,” which is why the AMA, AHA and ANA are “calling for all-hands-on-deck to confront this public health battle against COVID-19.”

However, people can still leave their homes for necessities, such as going to the grocery store or doctor, and to get fresh air. The letter reiterates, “those with urgent medical needs, including pregnant women, should seek care as needed. Everyone else should #StayHome.”



The AMA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are closely monitoring the COVID-19 global pandemic. Learn more at the AMA COVID-19 resource center and consult the AMA's physician guide to COVID-19.