



Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Dear Governor Pritzker,

Day by day, the trends in our COVID-19 data makes it abundantly clear: Illinois is in crisis.

We continue to advocate for our fellow Illinoisians to do the small things - the everyday actions to help prevent our emergency rooms and ICUs from filling with COVID-19 patients. Many of you have listened, modifying your Thanksgiving plans to stay home, wearing masks and, above all, committing to staying safe. **You are our heroes.**

But from the vantage point of healthcare workers on the COVID-19 front line, we know we must do more to stop the surge. The data show that recent mitigation efforts are not sufficiently stemming the tide of COVID-19 cases. All the while, our clinicians and health care systems approach crisis levels of overload. **Simply put: we need to do more.**

As such, we support and call for more intense, highly targeted efforts to decrease the spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, including, if absolutely necessary, a formal stay-at-home order.

Because a stay-at-home order has serious health and economic consequences for our patients and communities, we do not make this statement lightly. **We feel we are left with no choice.**

We urge state and local leaders to offer our small businesses real economic stability, via swift policy action to bolster their finances - and thereby remove the false dichotomy between our economy and our health.

Our motive is simple: we must control the spread of COVID-19 to reduce the already increasing burden on healthcare facilities - and to avoid the preventable harm associated with overwhelming our healthcare system.

While the Tier 3 mitigation order is a step in the right direction, it runs the risk of confusing a populace exhausted by the pace of this pandemic.

The messaging that needs to be heard: only leave the house if absolutely necessary (such medical reasons, grocery shopping and essential work). But for far too many of our communities, that message is lost in translation.

First, policy that continues to allow certain activities (such as bars that remain open) sends the public a mixed message as to the severity of our current, exponential COVID-19 trajectory.

Second, the concept of a "mitigation order" itself is confusing. Emphasizing tier 3 mitigation fails to convey the gravitas needed for people to understand the risks inherent in leaving their homes for non-essential activities.

Our communities now look to our state and local leaders for clarity in this jumbled moment. We need stronger messaging that emphasizes that the Governor's actions are, in fact, "orders" that require immediate behavior change.

Let us be clear: **As front line clinicians, we ask for everyone to take a "Pause" on anything that is not absolutely essential - immediately.**

In the spring, we came together as Illinoisians in a strong, swift manner to flatten the curve - and thereby reduce the burden on our health systems fighting that COVID-19 surge.

Let's use what we learned then, and the collective experiences we've gained since, to come together as a society and act in ways we know that work. Stay home, stay safe and pause - to halt COVID-19 in its tracks.

Sincerely,

IMPACT (Illinois Medical Professionals Action Collaborative Team)