



Tennessee Medical Association and Nashville Academy of Medicine Condemn Threats Toward Health Care Professionals

August 16, 2021

We condemn any and all threats, real or implied, made against physicians or any health care professionals carrying out their duties in good faith to provide information intended to protect the health of our fellow Tennesseans. Attacking these individuals or threatening them for doing their jobs is unacceptable.

During this national public health crisis, the only agenda of Tennessee physicians has been the health of Tennesseans. The best guidance we can provide to each other and to our fellow Tennesseans is based on the most current research we have — about a virus that is still relatively new to our species.

Over time that knowledge base will evolve, and so too can the virus. So, there will be times where we will need to be flexible and may be asked to return to previously proven methods of preventing infections.

Currently the best method of preventing infection and severe COVID disease — hospital, ventilator, disability or death — is vaccination. We therefore strongly recommend vaccination for all eligible persons age 12 or older. Current caseload statistics hold true that 90 - 95% of persons hospitalized with this disease are unvaccinated. While it is true that a vaccinated individual can still contract COVID-19, the risk of severe permanently debilitating, or deadly, disease is reduced dramatically.

For those who cannot vaccinate, masking in schools and other indoor places outside the household and social distancing are best second options for preventing infections. This certainly applies to children under the age of 12.

We are facing a tremendous surge of cases. This time the patients are younger. ICU beds are filling up. The optimal timing for vaccination is now.

The current situation is unfortunate and it is a burden. However, the enemy is the virus, not health care workers.