



# IDAHO ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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## STRONG MEDICINE FOR IDAHO

### **A Message from the IAFP Board of Directors The Importance of Public Health During the Pandemic June, 7, 2021**

The last year has been extremely difficult for all sectors of our community here in Idaho. We have faced an unprecedented public health challenge in the COVID-19 pandemic, and the economic repercussions of this pandemic here at home, nationally, and across the globe have been severe.

As family physicians, serving our patients here in Idaho, we have been on the frontline of these challenges. As always, our priority is the health of our patients, and we have remained committed to providing medical care, while doing our best to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. It has been a bumpy road, with dips and surges in infection forcing our friends and neighbors into isolation, complicating in-person attendance at school for our children, and changing nearly every detail about how we live our lives. As we face the additional challenge of caring for patients with the coronavirus, none of us has been immune from the sacrifices a pandemic such as this requires.

Idaho is starting to turn the corner of this crisis. Vaccines are now being distributed across the state, and our health systems have been resilient during the worst of the pandemic. As more Idahoans become vaccinated, it increases the chance we will emerge from this crisis sooner.

Make no mistake; COVID-19 is deadly and dangerous. As of early June, Over 2,103 Idahoans have died from coronavirus so far. There have been over 193,000 cases in Idaho since the pandemic began, and many Idahoans will live with the effects of this disease for years to come.

While we approach the hopeful end of this pandemic, family physicians must speak clearly about the importance of how public health decisions have been made and will be made in the future. Public health district leaders and others have been tasked with tough decisions and have faced enormous community pressure both from those who thought their actions were too stringent and those who expected a more robust response. Our public health districts are currently made up of a combination of elected officials and health care professionals. As family doctors, we are thankful for the leadership of all of these decision makers.

We want to emphasize that public health, to the greatest extent possible, should be based on science, facts, and expert opinions from medical and public health professionals. It's important to balance complex factors in these decisions, but politics should not drive the public health decisions we make. We can rely on facts and trained professionals that have dedicated their lives to these issues to help guide us as the North Star in our policies. It is our sincere hope that by prioritizing the public health knowledge and expertise needed to address the coronavirus, Idaho will emerge with a stronger public health system as a result of this pandemic.