



## A Critical Message from Your Central Ohio Hospitals

**We are the safety net of our community. And we need your help now.**

As the leaders of this community's hospitals and health care systems, we speak on behalf of our teams who are at the front lines of care, anchoring the health safety net for us all. That safety net is now in jeopardy, due to the surging spread of COVID-19 infection and rising hospitalizations. In the last four weeks, we have collectively witnessed a staggering 457% increase in COVID-19 patients in our hospitals.

**The Delta variant is changing the game.**

The Delta variant is the cause of nearly all the current cases of COVID-19 in central Ohio. It is at least 50% more contagious than the previous strain, and nearly everyone hospitalized is unvaccinated.

**We need you to act now.**

We urge you to become vaccinated. While we have supported vaccination for months, the recent full approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for people ages 16 and older should remove any remaining hesitancy about safety and effectiveness.

**Arm yourself with the facts.**

Many people are concerned by reports of breakthrough infections among those who have been vaccinated. Vaccines protect us from the worst dangers of a virus. When breakthrough COVID-19 cases occur, they are almost always far less severe than infections in unvaccinated people. The vaccines have shown that they are very effective in preventing severe cases of COVID-19 that lead to hospitalization and death.

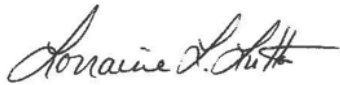
If you have already had a case of COVID-19, you should still get vaccinated. Antibody protection, especially when acquired through illness, varies in duration and strength. You can become reinfected, particularly with the contagious nature of the Delta variant. Vaccination helps provide an additional degree of protection.

We have great concerns about how the coming weeks will unfold in our community. We are writing now on behalf of our staff who we want to be healthy enough to care for you and all those we serve. These teams of healthcare professionals have tirelessly served our community through the many months of this pandemic and we commend them for their dedication in the face of this unprecedented challenge.

We urge you to act and help us change the trajectory for central Ohio.

- Everyone who can be vaccinated needs to be as soon as possible.
- Employers should encourage their staffs to get vaccinated. We commend the employers who are already leading the way.
- Everyone, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, should mask indoors and when in close proximity to others at school, work and in the community. This is the recommendation of the CDC, due to the more contagious Delta variant.

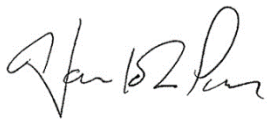
With urgency and respect,



Lorraine Lutton  
President and CEO  
Mount Carmel Health System



Steve Markovich, MD  
President and CEO, OhioHealth



Hal Paz, MD  
Executive Vice President and  
Chancellor for Health Affairs,  
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