MASSACHUSETTS Health & Hospital ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Massachusetts Hospitals are in Crisis

Hospital Leaders issue their most urgent message to the public yet, as the stability of the system hangs in the balance.

To the public:

Hospitals need your help -- now.

Every corner of our healthcare system is gasping for air. Every unit and hallway is full, procedures are being cancelled, and patients are waiting in ERs for hours on end for the care they need.

We have never been more fearful for what is to come if things aren't turned around quickly.

"This surge is different. As scary as things may have been for providers in the early days of COVID, things are now much worse," said Dr. Eric Dickson, President & CEO of UMass Memorial Healthcare and Chair of MHA's Board of Trustees. "COVID-19 admissions have spiked by almost 250% since Thanksgiving, the ranks of the healthcare workforce have been depleted, and beds are filled with patients who are sicker than before."

"We understand that this crisis may be invisible to most, but the reality is that this is everyone's problem. We fear that people will not grasp the magnitude of this situation until they are the ones in need of care and bear witness to it up-close," said Dr. Mark Keroack, President & CEO of Baystate Health.

"Please know, our healthcare community would not be sounding the alarm unless circumstances were so critical," said Christine Schuster, President & CEO of Emerson Hospital. "**To our community members: now is the time to act.** Now is the time to put our heads down and do all the things that providers and state leaders are asking for."

Those actions include:

- → Masking at all times when in public;
- → Avoiding emergency rooms for routine testing or for mild COVID-19 symptoms;
- → Getting vaccinated right away and boosted as soon as you are eligible; and
- → Providing support and gratitude to the healthcare workers in your life.

"**This is what it will take for Massachusetts hospitals to avoid the worst possible scenarios in the very near future**," said Michael Dandorph, President & CEO of Wellforce. "Providers and state leaders continue to work as one and to do everything in their power to be here when you need us. But these measures are simply not sustainable if they are not supported by public action."

At the heart of all of this are the commonwealth's caregivers, who are beyond the point of exhaustion. What's worse, they leave the job to see their sacrifices met with unmasked individuals in supermarkets and other places where Omicron can easily be spread. We must continue to fuel their hope through the decisions we make every day.

"**We need to turn this around in a matter of days, not a matter of weeks**," said MHA President & CEO Steve Walsh. "We are counting on the people of the commonwealth to take this message seriously and help lift our providers up in their greatest time of need. There is nothing our healthcare organizations care about more than being there for their patients and communities."

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About Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association

The Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association (MHA) serves as the unified voice for Massachusetts hospitals and healthcare providers. Founded in 1936, MHA represents over 100 hospitals, healthcare partners, and patients across the state. Through advocacy, education, and collaboration, MHA's mission is to improve the overall health of the commonwealth and support providers' efforts to offer high-quality, affordable, and accessible care. For further information about MHA, please visit https://www.mhalink.org/ or contact communications@mhalink.org.