



August 31, 2021

To The Yakima Health District Board:

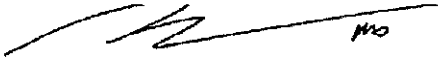
Our health care system is in crisis. The COVID pandemic has lasted longer than any of us could have predicted and wave after wave of illness have taken their toll on health care professionals and staff who are now exhausted and leaving their jobs in alarming numbers. This is a nationwide phenomenon and is occurring at a time when patients are seeking out care in record numbers for health conditions of all kinds, overwhelming our ability to care for them with the urgency they require. Our ERs are overrun and our inpatient beds are full. This is true in Yakima County and across the entire region and country. Patients who require specialty care often wait in one of our ERs for days at a time waiting for us to find a bed anywhere we can. Now COVID is rampaging through our community yet again and we have no more ability to flex and meet the demand.

There is hope however. We now have a vaccine that is safer and more effective than any other vaccine in the history of medicine. This has the ability to turn off the constant barrage of critically ill patients requiring admission for COVID and allow our acute care facilities to focus on other medical conditions. As we close in on 200,000,000 doses given in the US, the data is now clear. These vaccines are safe and incredibly effective. The FDA agrees and has now fully approved the first of them.

Even if our remaining citizens get immunized today though, the benefits are still weeks away. In the meantime we have another highly effective and perfectly safe tool to control this pandemic and ease some of the burden on our health care system. Time and again, across cities, counties, states, and nations, we have proven over and over again that masking prevents the spread of this disease. It takes everyone for this tool to be effective though, not just those who choose to do it to protect their fellow citizens. Last summer as cases surged in May, our masking compliance in Yakima County was at 35%. Through relentless efforts to promote masking and a general mandate for their use, the compliance climbed to 95% in early July. This coincided with a drop off in cases and effectively ended our first wave. Our current wave of COVID, which is proving to be the most significant yet, began exactly 2 weeks after the mask mandate ended in late June. This is no coincidence and the addition of these COVID cases on top of our already stressed system has put us in crisis.

As the undersigned leaders of the medical community in Yakima County, we support the vaccine mandate for health care professionals in order to ensure the safety of our patients and the integrity of our workforce. We further support the masking mandate for the general public to control the relentless spread of this deadly illness in our community.

Sincerely,



Martin Brueggemann M.D. Chief Medical Officer YVM



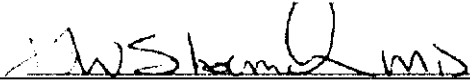
Jocelyn Pedrosa M.D. Chief Medical Officer YNHS



Michael Schaffrinna M.D. Chief Medical Officer CHCW



Kevin Heidrick PA-C Corporate Medical Officer YVFWC



David Shoemaker M.D. Chief of Staff Astria Sunnyside Hospital



Lori Alvord M.D. Chief of Staff Astria Toppenish Hospital

August 31, 2021

We, the undersigned members of the Yakima County medical community, affirm the following:

- 1) Vaccines for COVID-19 have proven to be safe and effective.
- 2) We strongly support the use of vaccines to help control the spread and severity of COVID-19 and encourage all individuals to speak to their personal physician for any questions about vaccination.
- 3) We support the universal need for health care workers to be vaccinated to protect themselves and their patients.
- 4) Universal masking has been proven to be safe and effective in limiting the spread of COVID 19.

Signed,

Martin Brueggemann M.D. CMO
Chatt A Johnson M.D. ACOG
Ryan Beachy PA-C
Shereen Stocker ARNP
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Josh Johnson D.O.
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August 31, 2021

To: Yakima County Board of Health

From: Medical Providers / Yakima Neighborhood Health Services

Dear Members of the Board of Health,

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services has provided Covid testing, treatment, social supports and vaccinations for thousands of our county's residents since the beginning of the pandemic. As primary care providers, we have seen the devastating effects this pandemic has had on our patients. We support the science that encourages strong public health practices to contain this deadly virus.

We, the undersigned, affirm the following:

- 1) Vaccines for COVID-19 have proven to be safe and effective.
- 2) We strongly support the use of vaccines to help control the spread and severity of COVID-19 and encourage all individuals to speak to their personal medical provider about the importance of becoming vaccinated.
- 3) We support the universal need for health care workers to be vaccinated to protect themselves and their patients.
- 4) Universal masking among those who do not have a contraindication has been proven to be safe and effective in limiting the spread of COVID 19.
- 5) Given the ongoing transmission of COVID-19 in Yakima County, we support universal masking among those who do not have a contraindication when in a place that is generally accessible to any person from outside their household.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Pedrosa".

Jocelyn Pedrosa, MD
Chief Medical Officer



Accredited by the Joint Commission



Patient Centered Medical Home Level 3



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Patient Centered Medical Home Level 3