



HCMS President -- Continue to wear your mask

As we pass the one year mark when the first case of COVID-19 appeared in Harris County, we have seen more than 500,000 cases and more than seven thousand deaths in the Metro area.

We are seeing progress ending this pandemic with the increase in vaccine options. About 650,000 Harris County residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine. However, this equates to only 18 percent of the population. Even with the number of vaccines going up and the drop in cases, we are now seeing new variants of the virus spreading in our community. This virus is still a danger to us and our patients.

Harris County physicians believe that it is too early to stop the behaviors we have adopted since the pandemic began. Social distancing, wearing masks and washing hands are proven methods to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We have been on the frontline of three different surges and, I fear, will experience a fourth surge after the recent lifting of the mask mandate. Masking up, washing up and staying apart have been, and still are, some of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of the disease while still conducting our daily lives.

This pandemic is not over. We should not act like it is. As physicians, the health of our patients, the safety of ourselves and staff are our top priorities, which is why we must continue to encourage our patients to continue to wear masks, social distance and wash their hands frequently. We also must encourage residents to get the vaccine when they are eligible.

Additionally, as physicians, we can and should require our patients to wear masks when they come into our offices for treatment to protect ourselves, staff, and other patients in our waiting rooms against the continued spread of this disease.

It is too early to let our guard down. This has been a defining moment for physicians and health care workers across the world and I am extremely proud to be a part of such a noble profession.