

Committee to Protect Medicare: Wisconsin docs blast Trump rally for risking more COVID-19 deaths as cases skyrocket

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MILWAUKEE, Wis. — Wisconsin physicians criticized President Trump for continuing to hold crowded campaign rallies, including one today in Green Bay, that increase the risk of COVID-19 spreading into communities that are experiencing more cases of deaths and sickness.

“Physicians across Wisconsin have repeatedly begged President Trump to stop coming to states that are seeing COVID-19 spread like wildfire and to start taking this pandemic seriously,” said Dr. Robert Freedland, MD, Wisconsin State Lead for the Committee to Protect Medicare and ophthalmologist in La Crosse. “As physicians, we see too much suffering and too many people dying from COVID-19. We must always remember and honor them as human beings with loved ones who will grieve for them. When President Trump holds an in-person rally and packs people close together, with few people wearing masks, he is dishonoring the memory of the people we have lost to COVID-19 and he is exposing more families across Wisconsin to this disease.”

This week, Wisconsin reported a [record-breaking 5,262 cases](#) in a single day Tuesday and the most deaths in a day, at 64. Brown County’s [positivity rate](#) over the last seven days through Tuesday was 32.97 percent, more than six times the rate recommended to safely reopen, which is no more than [5 percent](#).

Wisconsin’s huge spike in cases threatens to overwhelm hospitals, with estimates that hospitals could [run out of ICU beds](#) in two weeks. Several [communities](#) report

hospitals are at or [near capacity](#).

“President Trump’s rallies stand out for two reasons: They pack people close together with no masks, and they serve as platforms for him to continue spreading medically inaccurate misinformation — both of which put people’s safety a risk,” said Dr. Madelaine Tully, family physician in Milwaukee. “The more President Trump downplays COVID-19, the more he gives people a false sense of security, when we should all be redoubling our safety behaviors during this surge. With his words and his actions, President Trump is making things worse for Wisconsin families and putting their lives at risk.”

The physicians cautioned the media and the public to be wary of Trump and his administration’s most recent flurry of medically inaccurate misinformation and claims not based on facts.

- Vice President [Mike Pence](#) claimed on Wednesday that a vaccine would be available this year. Epidemiologists and vaccine experts have repeatedly cautioned that a vaccine may not be widely [available until 2021](#) and that vaccines [take time to work](#) before community immunity can be achieved.
- Trump has repeatedly downplayed COVID-19’s devastation by characterizing the pandemic as “[disappearing](#).” As of Thursday, 228,000 Americans have [died](#) of COVID-19 -an average of around 1,000 deaths a day — and 8.9 million people have been sickened.
- In recent days, [physicians](#) and [hospitals](#) have pushed back against Trump’s medically inaccurate misinformation with clear facts. Trump’s false claim that doctors and hospitals are inflating COVID-19 deaths to get more money has been widely [debunked](#) and [criticized](#), and reflects Trump’s misunderstanding of how death certificates, which note underlying causes of deaths, are completed.
- And on Saturday, President Trump’s chief of staff Mark Meadows [acknowledged](#): “We are not going to control the pandemic.” In the Oct. 24 interview, Meadows said the administration’s focus was on vaccines and treatment.

“Instead of holding a risky, in-person campaign rally, President Trump should do what he should have done from the start, and that’s requiring people to wear masks, implement a stay-at-home order, and ensure health workers have the masks, tests and resources we need to protect people and save lives,” said Dr. Robert Freedland. “President Trump has clearly thrown in the towel and is willing to allow COVID-19 to continue devastating Wisconsin families. By continuing to hold campaign rallies in states that have been hardest hit in this pandemic, including Wisconsin, President Trump opens the door to further spread of COVID-19, and more pain and suffering through the winter. And as physicians, we remain deeply concerned that the president still threatens healthcare for millions of Americans even as he exposes them to potential sickness from COVID-19.”

President Trump supports a lawsuit to eliminate the Affordable Care Act, which threatens healthcare for more than 2.4 million people in Wisconsin — or two in five people — with a [preexisting condition](#) such as asthma, diabetes, cancer and potentially long-term damage to vital organs from [COVID-19](#).

About the Committee to Protect Medicare

The Committee to Protect Medicare is an advocacy organization made up of frontline doctors engaging in direct advocacy and communications in support of a stronger health care system in America. To learn more:

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