

Committee to Protect Medicare: Wisconsin physicians - Trump should skip reckless in-person rallies, focus on COVID-19 strategy

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MILWAUKEE – Wisconsin physicians said President Trump should skip in-person rallies like the one he plans in Oshkosh today because mass gatherings increase the risk of spreading COVID-19, and that he should focus instead on finally implementing a robust pandemic response to slow transmissions and save lives.

Trump's visit to Wisconsin comes as health providers raise concerns that testing supplies and reagents intended for the state are being [diverted](#) and [deaths](#) surpassed 1,000. [Nationally](#), COVID-19 has sickened 5.3 million Americans and killed 167,000 people since the pandemic began in the United States in February.

"President Trump has had seven months to lead by example and unite the nation in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and he keeps failing to step up to the plate," said Dr. Thomas Hunt, MD, a family medicine physician in Durand.

"Repeatedly, President Trump refuses to listen to science and his own advisors to promote behaviors that can save lives but rather, he sends confusing messages. At once he reads a pre-prepared statement from his medical advisors recommending mask wear and social distancing, followed shortly thereafter by Twitter messages to 'liberate' states and holding political gatherings with hundreds of people. He refuses to wear a mask because he claims it would make him look weak. By continuing to thumb his nose at scientific evidence, from forcing students back into classrooms before safeguards are in place, to calling on college football to proceed as normal, to holding rallies that increase transmission risk, President Trump will only prolong the COVID-19 pandemic, put lives in danger and delay our nation's recovery. By

now, a true leader would have taken the bull by the horns and called on the nation to follow a unified plan, but President Trump has left the response to be fractured and varied by each state throughout our nation, leading to our dubious distinction as the nation with the highest case count and death total in the entire world to date.”

“By now, the American people are well aware that President Trump will not hesitate to put the safety of Americans at risk for a [photo op](#), and his campaign rally in Oshkosh is another example of a reckless political stunt that will unnecessarily expose people to COVID-19,” said Dr. Karen Chao, MD, FAAP, a pediatrician in Milwaukee. “As physicians, we are deeply concerned that President Trump is more concerned about his image than he is about fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Medical professionals and health experts everywhere are urging President Trump to behave responsibly, avoid mass gatherings and get to work protecting people from COVID-19.”

Trump held a campaign rally in Tulsa in June that attracted thousands of supporters and which Oklahoma health officials later linked to a [surge](#) in COVID-19 cases, with around 500 new cases about two weeks after the rally. The week before, Tulsa saw a fraction of that number. Former Republican presidential contender [Herman Cain](#) attended the Tulsa rally without a mask, was hospitalized for severe COVID-19 11 days after the event and died on July 30.

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