

# SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin: Statement on U.S. COVID-19 death toll rising to 100,000 lives lost

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*As the national death toll rises to 100,000, SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin released the following statement:*

“As the country reaches a grim milestone marking 100,000 lives lost to COVID-19, our hearts go out to all those who have lost a loved one. It is with heavy hearts that we acknowledge this is not our final toll. We are not at the end of this pandemic. Rather, we have reached a crossroads in this pandemic. As states across the country lift restrictions, healthcare workers are bracing for a new wave of infections. Given the toll we have already seen, we urge lawmakers and employers to act boldly and urgently to take a different path that will prevent further devastating loss of life.

“In the time of crisis, healthcare workers are doing all we can to provide the best care for our patients and protect the public health, but we do not see that same commitment from our employers or elected leaders.

“As this crisis continues, we cannot afford to repeat the failures that put so many lives at risk.

“Too many of those hit hardest by this virus are black and brown people. Because of systemic inequities that deny equal access to healthcare and treatment, jobs that pay a living wage or provide paid sick leave, black and brown people are more likely to be exposed to this virus and die. Lawmakers should prioritize solutions that ensure every one of us, regardless of our race or where we live, gets the care and treatment we need.

“In Wisconsin and the rest of the country, we need public health measures that are known to

be effective in saving lives: contact tracing, widespread and free testing, and safe public and workplace practices.

“Months into this crisis, it is unacceptable that those of us tasked with keeping our patients safe cannot keep ourselves and our families safe. We need a Healthcare Heroes Act to provide paid sick leave, hazard pay and healthcare we need so that we can continue to do our jobs protecting the public.

“And lawmakers must pass more emergency relief that will go directly to working families, not corporations, so that people can stay home without worrying about economic survival.

“As we remember the 100,000 who we have lost to this devastating virus, we must harness this moment as a reckoning. We can build new systems that ensure everyone can get the care they need, and work toward a stronger, healthier and more just future for all.”

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