



State of Missouri Team Members,

Thank you all for stepping up from the very start when we had our first case of COVID-19 on March 7 in Missouri. We have been working to prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus with the hope that we would get to a better place if a vaccine could be developed. We believe that day is almost here.

We are incredibly encouraged so far from what we have learned from the corporations and clinical trials working to research and develop vaccine candidates. Much of that work has been done right here in Missouri. They are proving to be both safe and effective. But it is important to know that the vaccine alone will not put an end to the pandemic.

This month in Missouri, we have experienced more case growth and deaths related to COVID-19 than in any other month so far. Right now is a critical time for our state, and we need to act with care and concern for our loved ones as we have now begun the holiday season. As vaccines gradually begin to roll out in limited quantities, we cannot now or in the immediate future let our guard down. The vaccine along with these combined efforts will get us to a safer place: staying home when sick, wearing a mask, social distancing, good handwashing.

Additionally, a vaccine sitting on a shelf will do no one any good. It's the actual act of vaccinating a person--this is what will help us turn the corner. A combination of good public health principles and a public willing to be vaccinated to gain immunity and help stop the spread--this is what will get us to a better place.

When we look at why people get a vaccination, one of the major drivers is influencers including health care providers, leaders and others in the community that people look up to and respect. We believe our state workforce can be these influencers.

As a physician, I understand that choosing to be vaccinated is a personal choice. What we want to do is provide you with the factual information that you need to feel empowered to make an informed decision for you and your family. Please take a few minutes to look through the information on our new website, [MOPlastopsCOVID.com](https://moplastopsCOVID.com). As our team continues to learn more, we will provide updates so we can keep you as informed as possible.

We look forward to turning the corner together.

I hope you all had a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

In good health,

Dr. Randall Williams

DHSS Director

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