



Colleagues,

My family and I hope you had a happy holiday season and were able to recharge for 2021.

Last year brought unexpected challenges for all of us. A year ago, no one thought a global pandemic would disrupt all our lives – at home, in our communities, and here at work too. Now, we will never forget how COVID-19 has touched so many lives, sometimes tragically. At the same time, you and your colleagues adapted, and continued to deliver for our fellow citizens in countless ways. Many have said never before has your state government service been more important. From my family to you: Thank you!

We look forward to 2021 with hope. Why? True, the fight against COVID-19 is far from over. But we now have new weapons in the fight against the virus. Vaccinations are critical to reducing the spread of the virus. They will help us to return to our pre-COVID-19 lives without fear. The first doses of the COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Missouri before the Christmas holiday. Already over 100,000 Missourians have received their first dose of the vaccines. Some of our colleagues in state government service have been among them.

In the weeks ahead, more of you will have the opportunity to receive a vaccine. You will have questions. You will also hear rumors and misinformation. Sometimes it will be hard to tell fact from fiction. That's why we want to get you accurate information. We want you to have what you need to make the right decisions to protect yourselves and your families.

And that's why I want to share with you a presentation by **Dr. Kimberly Thomas**. Dr. Thomas is a microbiologist and immunologist at Washington University in St. Louis. She recently spoke to Governor Parson's Cabinet team in our COVID-19 Response Forum. Dr. Thomas explained how the new COVID-19 vaccines were developed, tested, and work. She busts the common myths about these vaccines. I bet she addressed many of the questions you have.

The video of Dr. Thomas's presentation and the following Q&A are available now as a MOLearning training path. [Log in and view this video.](#)

If you are experiencing issues, go to <https://molearning.mo.gov/> to find links and instructions on how to sign into MOLearning.

I also encourage you to check out the state's vaccine information website at: <https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/>. It's a great resource to get the facts. You can stay up to date on the latest vaccine developments and availability.

Vaccines are great news. But they will take months before their full impact is felt. We can't let down our guard. The basic tools are just as important now as they have ever been. We will still need to watch our distance, wear masks, and wash our hands.

Let's make 2021 the year we beat the pandemic. Thanks so much for what you do every day to make Missouri stronger.

Take care of yourselves, your teammates, and your families. Stay safe.

Drew Erdmann  
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