



OSF<sup>®</sup> HEALTHCARE

## OSF HealthCare Part of National Campaign to Encourage Everyone to #MaskUp

### For Immediate Release

**Contact:** Shelli Dankoff, Media Relations Supervisor – OSF HealthCare (309) 655-3897

**(Peoria, IL | Nov. 19, 2020)** – OSF HealthCare is joining 100 of the nation’s top health care systems, representing thousands of hospitals in communities across the U.S. with an urgent plea for all Americans to mask up, because wearing a face mask is our best chance at slowing the surging COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 11 million Americans have tested positive for the virus – including an additional one million in just the past week – leading to more than 250,000 deaths. With 13 hospitals across Illinois and one in the upper peninsula of Michigan, OSF HealthCare has felt the impact of the increasing number of people with COVID-19 who require hospitalization.

This trend is causing increasing concern for OSF HealthCare and others, not only because of the demands on physical needs like personal protective equipment (PPE) and hospital beds, but also because of a potential shortage of healthy caregivers to handle a rapidly increasing number of patients. The next several months will be critical.

Though there has been positive news about vaccine development, no one knows when those vaccines will be ready for widespread use. In the meantime, everyone must remain vigilant, take precautions and follow public health orders. The power to do what is right is now in the hands of everyone everywhere.

“We are proud to partner with these other well-respected health care organizations on this important public service campaign,” said Bob Sehring, CEO of Peoria, Illinois-based OSF HealthCare. “The message is simple: we need everyone in the communities we serve to help us help keep our communities healthy by wearing a mask.”

Beginning today, a public service message will run in The New York Times, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and The Los Angeles Times.

The message reads:

*“As the top nationally-ranked hospitals, we know it’s tough that we all need to do our part and keep wearing masks. But, here’s what we also know: The science has not changed. Masks slow the spread of COVID-19. So, please join us as we all embrace this simple ask: Wear. Care. Share with #MaskUp. Together, wearing is caring. And together, we are saving lives.”*

“[Recent studies](#) have shown that facemasks successfully limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus in two ways: by protecting the wearer against inhalation of harmful pathogens and by preventing exposure of those around the wearer,” said Mike Cruz, M.D., Chief Operating Officer, OSF HealthCare. “We will get through this pandemic, together. By wearing a mask, you limit potential exposure and help us conserve vital medical resources by stopping the spread of the virus.”

In addition to masking, the CDC suggests that everyone minimize the number of non-household contacts, maintain a physical distance of at least six feet, and limit the amount of time around others, especially while indoors and in poorly ventilated areas. For further information about masking guidelines – how to choose a mask, how to properly wear a mask – visit the [CDC website](#).

For more information on COVID-19, including frequently asked questions, please visit the OSF HealthCare COVID-19 digital hub: [www.osfhealthcare.org/covid19/](http://www.osfhealthcare.org/covid19/).

**About Us:** [EveryMaskUp.com](http://EveryMaskUp.com) is a collaboration of dozens of leading health systems representing thousands of hospitals across the U.S. joining together to create messages for the betterment of communities they serve. The impetus for this, and other public service campaigns to follow, came from a group of health care marketing and communications executives meeting for a decade and reengaged weekly since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The goal is to share knowledge and experience, best practices, strategies and resources-knowing they can accomplish more together. Founded and led by Rhoda Weiss, Ph.D., Los Angeles-based national health care leader and consultant, the expanded coalition is partnering with Cleveland Clinic Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Paul Matsen and his team for this effort. Additionally, hospitals and health systems on a regional basis continue to come together to send messages like these of prevention and safety, hope and healing, life and death, care and caring.

**OSF HealthCare** is an integrated health system owned and operated by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. OSF HealthCare employs more than 23,600 Mission Partners in 147 locations, including 14 hospitals – ten acute care, four critical access – with 2,097 licensed beds, and two colleges of nursing throughout Illinois and Michigan. The OSF HealthCare physician network employs more than 1,500 primary care, specialist and advanced practice providers. OSF HealthCare, through OSF Home Care Services, operates an extensive network of home health and hospice services. It also owns Pointcore, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization; and OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. More at <https://www.osfhealthcare.org>.

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