



September 3, 2021

Ted Shaw
President/CEO, Texas Hospital Association
1108 Lavaca, Suite 700
Austin, TX 78701-2180

Dear Mr. Shaw,

Fueled by the Delta variant, Texas is seeing widespread transmission of COVID-19. We also know that increased vaccination rates will reduce COVID-19 hospitalizations.

I ask you, as a touchpoint to our hardest hit hospitals and communities, to encourage Texas facilities to provide a snapshot of the type of COVID-19 patients currently overwhelming hospitals, especially their vaccination status.

The eyewitness accounts hospitals provide us convey the severity of the situation. Even so, more systematic data from Texas facilities will empower us to communicate an important message to all Texans, including those hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Please assist DSHS in collecting Texas-specific data about the vaccination status of Texas patients.

We are confident such data will prove that vaccination – especially full vaccination – avoids hospitalization and reduces the risks of long-term sequelae of COVID-19. Specifically, we are looking for a sample of hospitals from across the state that would be willing to share the vaccination status patients for their facilities on a weekly basis.

We believe this data will favorably influence Texans' choices this fall, particularly to get vaccinated. I would appreciate your partnership in being able to collect and disseminate this information as quickly as possible.

Should you agree to this initiative, my staff will work with you and your team on a methodology that minimize the burden on already stretched hospitals.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health of all Texans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John Hellerstedt", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Hellerstedt, M.D.