California Hospitals Launch “Care Can’t Wait” Public Service Campaign Encouraging People to Seek Needed Medical Care

Animated Public Service Announcement Targets Those Reluctant to Seek Care During Pandemic

SACRAMENTO (August 24, 2020) – In an effort to avert a secondary health care crisis resulting from people avoiding necessary medical care, California hospitals are launching a statewide public service campaign aimed at reassuring people that hospitals are safe and ready to care for everyone in need during the pandemic.

“Care Can’t Wait” is centered around a 30-second animated video that describes the concrete safety precautions California hospitals have implemented to ensure the well-being of everyone seeking care — both patients with symptoms of COVID-19 and those with non-COVID conditions. The video is being distributed to TV and radio stations across California. Additionally, a dynamic social media presence is planned.

“We understand some people may have concerns about coming to a hospital during this unprecedented public health crisis,” said Carmela Coyle, President & CEO of the California Hospital Association. “But deferring necessary medical care is not the right answer. We want everyone to know that if you or your loved one is experiencing signs of a serious medical condition, hospitals are safe, ready, and waiting to care for you.”

Coyle noted that hospitals across the state have implemented a number of new and enhanced procedures to ensure the safety of patients, employees, and visitors, including:

- Screening and temperature checks of everyone entering a facility
- Separate triage and treatment areas for COVID and non-COVID patients
- Enhanced deep cleaning procedures utilizing UV disinfecting technology and anti-viral cleaning products
- Requiring that all hospitals workers, patients, and visitors wear face masks at all times

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The campaign comes at a time when many Californians remain concerned about the safety of seeking medical care from physicians and hospitals because of the pandemic. More than 76% of Californians responding to a recent online poll said they have a medium-to-high concern about returning to regular health care activities because of COVID-19. And in a recent Harris Poll, one in four people said they would rather stay home if they experienced a heart attack or stroke.

Additionally, a National Cancer Institute model of breast and colorectal cancers predicts there will be 10,000 excess deaths in the U.S. over the next 10 years because of pandemic-related delays in diagnosing and treating these diseases. Also, the number of vaccinations for kids in California dropped by nearly half this past April compared to the previous year, as many parents avoided doctors’ offices because of the pandemic.

“The fact that so many people are hesitant to seek necessary medical care is very alarming — and points to a secondary health care crisis in the making,” Coyle said. “Not only are we in the midst of the pandemic, but we face an even greater disease burden resulting from undiagnosed or untreated illnesses, and missed preventative health opportunities.”

“For everyone’s health and well-being, California’s hospitals urge everyone to seek care when they need it,” Coyle added. “Do this for yourself and for your loved ones.”

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