

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

March 21, 2020 Media Statement: Quitting Smoking



Audience: All colleagues, media general public

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Quit Smoking to Fight COVID-19: Statement by Daniel Roth, M.D., Chief Clinical Officer and Mouhanad Hammami, M.D., Senior Vice President, Community Health & Well-Being

As families and communities confront the increasing spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), Trinity Health continues to care for the people we serve as we navigate this difficult crisis. Part of our role is to help people understand what they can do to protect themselves from contracting the virus, including quitting smoking.

Leading health experts have long studied the harm that is caused to the immune system from smoking and vaping. Recent studies demonstrate individuals who smoke or vape are more likely to contract COVID-19 and more likely to experience more severe symptoms.*

Beyond the fight against COVID-19, there are other immediate health benefits of smoking cessation. According to the World Health Organization: within 20 minutes, heart rate and blood pressure drop; within 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal; and within 2-12 weeks, circulation improves, and lung function increases.

Now is the time to act. We can improve public health and slow the spread of COVID-19 by educating the public about the immediate health benefits of smoking and vaping cessation. Public health leaders, elected officials, health systems, and media outlets all can help.

Trinity Health has prioritized reducing tobacco use across our 22-state health system through a commitment to tobacco screening and referral, connecting patients to cessation resources, and advocacy for anti-tobacco policies at the federal, state and local levels.

Trinity Health invites public health leaders, elected officials, and media outlets to immediately promote the health benefits of going smoke-free and to help smokers quit and protect nonsmokers. To access cessation support, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

About Trinity Health

Trinity Health is one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation, serving diverse communities that include more than 30 million people across 22 states. Trinity Health includes 92 hospitals, as well as 106 continuing care locations that include PACE programs, senior living facilities and home care and hospice services. Its continuing care programs provide nearly 2.5 million visits annually. Based in Livonia, Michigan, and with annual operating revenues of \$19.3 billion and assets of \$27 billion, the organization returns \$1.2 billion to its communities annually in the form of charity care and other community benefit programs. Trinity Health employs about 129,000 colleagues, including about 7,500 employed physicians and clinicians. For more information, visit www.trinity-health.org. You can also follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

* Source: Vardava C.I. & Nikitara K. Tob. Induc. Dis. 2020;18(March):20, including about 7,500 employed physicians and clinicians. For more information, visit www.trinity-health.org. You can also follow us on Facebook or Twitter.