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## **'Tis the season. Be safe.**

November 30, 2021

If like me, you're preparing to wrap yourself in the warmth of the holiday season, and you're entering a season of thanks and gratitude, as well as remembrance, I feel the time has come to acknowledge that the coronavirus will be an ongoing reality in our daily lives. This is our next normal. And if we're going to survive alongside it, we must continue to adapt and change along with it.

And, if you're like me, you're anxiously awaiting family and communal holiday gatherings, a return to the indoors as the weather cools, increased seasonal travel, and all the risks implied. So, as we take steps to celebrate together and give thanks and share hopes this holiday season, let's be mindful of our individual and collective power to protect our families, friends, and loved ones from the virus.

Especially with the alerts coming from Europe as countries shut down once again, and as some eastern states begin to declare emergencies, where possible continue to wear masks, use social distancing, and follow tried and true public health measures to protect the health of our loved ones and our communities. We're seeing once again, and in some cases with more ferocity than before, a return to illness and hospitalization as the virus mutates and spreads.

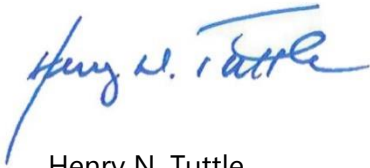
While I am hopeful that the potential for a virus surge this holiday season will be different from last year, I am also practical enough to interpret the warning signs that quite possibly there are troubled waters ahead. This past week of Thanksgiving, for example, three family members were hospitalized, two have since passed away. Like them, there are many who still are not fully vaccinated and remain at risk, unnecessarily so. Why? For those who remain unvaccinated, please plan for your vaccinations now, before communal holiday festivities commence again in earnest. Visit [myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) for an appointment today.

Our youth, ages 5-11, are now eligible to be vaccinated and this is a good step forward. For those already vaccinated, we're at the six-month mark for most when booster shots are recommended. While you're at it, please be sure to get your flu shot, too, if you haven't already.

As we are seeing variants – like Delta and Omicron – spread around the globe, vaccine breakthroughs with these new variants are to be expected in this next normal. Act accordingly. Adapt and change. Survive.

This holiday season, let's use our creativity to observe the holidays safely. Plan new traditions that allow for outdoor gatherings like walks on the beach or hikes in the mountains. Let's allow for and encourage social distancing at social events, outdoors when possible. As this year comes towards a close, I am thankful for the many incredible contributions of the staff and members of Health Center Partners in keeping us safe and providing us care. As you can see from our new [2021 Impact Report](#), it was a year of change, adaptation, and growth. We have much for which to be thankful. Please join me in celebrating safely.

I wish all of you and yours a happy and safe holiday season.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry N. Tuttle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Henry N. Tuttle  
President and Chief Executive Officer

[Health Center Partners of Southern California](#), a family of companies, includes a 17-membership organization of federally qualified health centers, Indian Health Services Organizations, both urban and sovereign, and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, collectively serving 917,000 patients each year, for 3.9 million patient visits each year, at 170 practice sites across San Diego, Riverside and Imperial counties, and is the seventh largest provider group in the region. [Read our latest Impact Report.](#)