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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Release

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NC PHYSICIAN GROUPS SUPPORT IN-PERSON LEARNING OPTION FOR NC SCHOOLS

The North Carolina Medical Society (NCMS), representing physicians and PAs statewide, and the NC Pediatric Society, representing the state's pediatricians and other child health professionals, support the decision to re-open schools for in-person learning in North Carolina as long as the risks of acquiring the COVID-19 virus are mitigated as outlined in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) school reopening guidelines and the American Academy of Pediatrics Reopening Principles.

"The data shows that children are less likely to have had the virus and less likely to have severe symptoms if they do acquire it, yet they still can be infected and spread the virus to others. Therefore, we continue to strongly urge strict adherence to mitigation efforts both in the schools and in the larger community," said NCMS President **Philip M. Brown, Jr., MD**. "While school systems need to follow the CDC's guidance to ensure the safest possible environment for our children, we all need to wear a mask, wash our hands and practice physical distancing from those outside our household. We all need to do our part to help keep our children healthy and learning to their full potential."

Weighing the risks of acquiring the virus against the benefits of resuming in-person learning is a complicated calculus, dependent on many factors unique to each community including adequate resources for schools. The CDC and pediatricians in our state and nationally who know and treat young patients understand this and offer thoughtful guidance based on the latest science around health impacts of the pandemic.

We know that absence from school due to the pandemic has had a dramatic impact on children's mental health and development. Many families are struggling with food insecurity, housing issues, financial and health issues and cannot adequately attend to their children's educational or emotional requirements. Returning to in-person learning, with proper risk mitigation, is the best way to address many children's educational, social and emotional needs.

"Humans need humans and our children need in-person instruction for their positive intellectual and emotional development," said President of the NC Pediatric Society **Christoph Diasio, MD, FAAP**. "We're seeing more anxiety and depression among our patients, along with increased obesity and myopia. When **in-person** schools can be safe for students, teachers and staff, they are a great place for kids to be with other kids and caring adults."

(more)

As new, more transmissible variants are emerging, it is crucial that we work together to mitigate community spread through the 3 'W's, getting a vaccine when eligible to do so in order to avoid worse immediate outcomes for our community and in the long term for our children's future. No single action will stem the spread of this virus, but together we can make a difference.

Resources:

- [The CDC offers credible and comprehensive information on the best way to open schools for in-person instruction here.](#)
- [The NC Department of Health and Human Services guidance for our state is located here.](#)
- The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued guidance on school reopening as well. [Access it here.](#)

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About the North Carolina Medical Society: *The North Carolina Medical Society is the oldest professional member organization in North Carolina, representing physicians and physician assistants who practice in the state. Founded in 1849, the Society seeks to provide leadership in medicine by uniting, serving and representing physicians and their health care teams to enhance the health of North Carolinians.*

About the NC Pediatric Society: *Founded in 1931, the North Carolina Pediatric Society (NCPeds) is the state affiliate Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics with more than 2,000 pediatrician and pediatric health professional members. Its mission is to empower pediatricians and its partners to foster the physical, social, and emotional well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.*