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JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.
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Statement on the Resignation of White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Jeffrey D. Zients

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I called on Jeff Zients to lead my administration's COVID-19 response because there is no one better at delivering results than Jeff. COVID-19 is the greatest public health crisis we've faced in my lifetime and it required the country to build from scratch an emergency response infrastructure that could quickly and equitably get people life-saving protections. Jeff put his decades of management experience to work formulating and executing on a plan to build the infrastructure we needed to deliver vaccines, tests, treatment, and masks to hundreds of millions of Americans.

When Jeff took this job, less than 1% of Americans were fully vaccinated; fewer than half our schools were open; and unlike much of the developed world, America lacked any at-home COVID tests. Today, almost 80% of adults are fully vaccinated; over 100 million are boosted; virtually every school is open; and hundreds of millions of at-home tests are distributed every month. In addition, the US leads the global effort to fight COVID, delivering more free vaccines to other countries than every other nation on Earth. The progress that he and his team have made is stunning and even more important consequential. Lives have been saved.

Jeff spent the last 14 months working tirelessly to help combat COVID. He is a man of service and an expert manager. I will miss his counsel and I'm grateful for his service.

Thanks to all the progress we've made, Americans are safely moving back to more normal routines, using the effective new tools we have to enable us to reduce severe COVID cases and make workplaces and schools safer. But our work in combatting COVID is far from done. We must continue the effort to provide more vaccines and boosters. We must get a vaccine approved for the youngest children. We must continue to improve how our schools and workplaces cope with COVID. We must take special care to protect the vulnerable from COVID, even as many restrictions are lifted. We need to provide tests, and treatments, and masks. We must fight the virus overseas, prepare for new waves, and new variants—all of which can be coming. And we must work with Congress to fund these vital steps, as time is running out to stay ahead of the virus.

To lead this effort, I am excited to name Dr. Ashish Jha as the new White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator. Dr. Jha is one of the leading public health experts in America, and a well known figure to many Americans from his wise and calming public presence. And as we enter a new moment in the pandemic—executing on my National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and managing the ongoing risks from COVID—Dr. Jha is the perfect person for the job.

I appreciate both Jeff and Dr. Jha for working closely to ensure a smooth transition, and I look forward to continued progress in the months ahead.

Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Statement on the Resignation of White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Jeffrey D. Zients Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project
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