

October 20, 2020

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Governor of North Dakota
600 E. Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Governor Burgum:

As North Dakota physicians and long term care providers, we have a professional and ethical duty to protect the safety and well-being of our patients and residents. We had all hoped that our ongoing efforts to flatten the curve and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 would find our state in a position of community containment by this point in the year. Unfortunately, that is not the case. North Dakota's hospitals are nearing capacity, and the deaths of our state's citizens continue to rise to alarming levels.

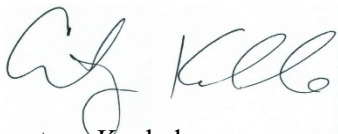
As you have noted many times, we each have a role to play in our state and our nation's response to COVID-19. You have consistently called upon North Dakotans to do their part and remain vigilant in exercising the precautions necessary to slow the spread. However, voluntary efforts have proven to not be effective, even though mounting evidence continues to grow showing that masks work.

As COVID-19 infections and death rates continue to climb, the undersigned strongly supports use of all available policy mechanisms, including a statewide order, to ensure North Dakotans more widely adopt public use of masks for the duration of the pandemic. Requiring public use of masks represents an immediate opportunity to drastically reduce the spread. A statewide order, appropriately structured to account for young children and other health considerations, further enhances the state's efforts to protect patient safety and safeguards progress toward economic recovery.

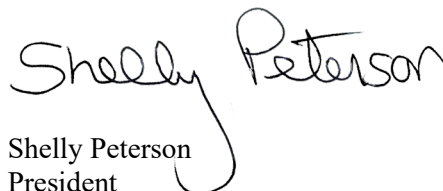
Therefore, we respectfully ask that you consider issuing a mask mandate. We are happy to discuss this in greater detail with you or your staff. Please contact NDMA executive director Courtney Koebele at ckoebele@ndmed.com or 701-400-6222.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Koebele", written over a light blue rectangular background.

Courtney Koebele
Executive Director
ND Medical Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelly Peterson", written over a light blue rectangular background.

Shelly Peterson
President
ND Long Term Care Association