



Minnesota Hospital Association



July 13, 2020

The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor of the State of Minnesota
Via email

Dear Gov. Walz:

On behalf of Minnesota's hospitals and health systems and the state's business community, we are writing you today in strong support of the public education campaign you are undertaking to educate and engage the public in the common sense steps we all must take to continue combatting the spread of COVID-19.

As we learned during the first phases of this pandemic, we are most successful in slowing the spread when all of us – public health, businesses, health care providers and the public – are working together as partners, with a shared understanding of the risks and characteristics of the virus as well as the shared responsibilities, strategies and goals that will enable us to manage it for the long-term. During the “Stay Home” phase of the state's response, you and your administration charted a clear course for Minnesota that was consistently reinforced with well-defined goals and simple, straightforward messaging. That leadership and those efforts at public education and engagement were vital in helping us slow the spread and provide our health care system with the time and resources to build capacity to care for patients in the event of a surge.

The phased approach and dials allowed businesses to reopen safely. That approach is needed again. As you well know, because of conflicting early public health guidance on masks, their use by the general public has become a sensitive issue in our state and nation. A comprehensive public campaign focused on education and engagement of the public on this topic will help to produce the kind of committed, collective partnership that will be needed to ensure the success of our “Stay Safe” efforts over the long term.

A direct, concise, and sustained public education effort that is inclusive of young people, communities of color and multiple languages will pay significant dividends as we continue to adjust to life with the ever-present threat of COVID-19. As you are aware, this broad effort, using multiple channels, needs to be executed as soon as possible while the window of opportunity for concerted public action to make a difference still remains open.

While we in Minnesota are managing the spread of COVID-19 better than some, it is clear we will be engaged in this effort for some time. As such, the public must have confidence that, despite the threat of COVID-19, life can continue – both economically and socially. But that confidence will only come from a shared understanding of the virus and the tools to fight it. Hundreds of millions of state and federal dollars have been invested in Minnesota’s response effort thus far – and to good effect. Going forward, we are extremely supportive of immediate investment in educating and engaging the public if we hope to continue and build on our collective successes over the long term.

Health care heroes in our hospitals and health systems need the public’s help to ensure hospital capacity and the safety of our front line caregivers. Our businesses and economy can remain open and thriving, but only with the public’s support and participation. If there is any partnership opportunity for our respective organizations, we can collaborate with you in specifically targeting these messages to our audiences, extending the reach of the campaign. We are eager to spread the campaign’s messages. We believe this critical step of unleashing this public campaign right now is what is needed to keep Minnesota a step ahead in fighting this global pandemic.

We look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rahul Koranne
President and CEO
Minnesota Hospital Association



Douglas B. Loon
President
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce