



December 2, 2020

Letter to Editor on Extending Mask Mandate:

Mask mandates are working in North Dakota and Governor Burgum should extend the statewide mandate at least two months until February 13, 2021 or longer.

North Dakota had the greatest COVID outbreak and the highest death rate in the world in October when 64 pediatricians wrote an open letter to the Governor on October 14 requesting a mask mandate. Within 2 weeks enough cities had enacted mask mandates to cover one half of the state's population and on November 13, the Governor enacted a statewide mandate effective until December 13.

What has happened since then? Mask use has increased in North Dakota according to the Carnegie Mellon University survey of Facebook users from 69.5% on October 1st to 89% by November 26th. South Dakota has gone without a mask mandate and their most recent 7-day COVID mortality rate is now 33% higher than North Dakota's.

Active COVID cases in North Dakota have dropped from 11,311 on November 14th to 5,686 on December 1st, a 46.7% decrease! North Dakota's cumulative death curve has thankfully started to improve after it's exponential increase in October and November, decreasing 36% since November 24th.

North Dakotans need to remain vigilant and continue to wear masks over the winter months while immunizations gradually become available. Over 950 of our citizens have died already. Working together and keeping the statewide mask mandate will help to further reduce the rates of death and disability.

With Gratitude,

Kathy Anderson

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