

Wyoming County Health Officers  
Wyoming Medical Society  
Wyoming Hospital Association

12 November, 2020

The Honorable Mark Gordon  
Governor of Wyoming  
State Capitol  
200 West 24th Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Dear Governor Gordon,

During our County Health Officer calls on Thursday October 22, October 29, and November 12, 2020, all County Health Officers were united in recommending a statewide mask ordinance with the hope of preventing more death and disease from COVID-19 among our Wyoming citizens. The Wyoming Medical Society added its unified voice during its Quarterly Board of Trustees meeting. The Wyoming Hospital Association has also added its support to a statewide mask mandate.

We understand that there is a mechanism for each county to individually mandate a mask ordinance. However, this would take considerably more time and would likely be less consistently achieved. We feel that a statewide mandate sends a more powerful and effective message in a more timely manner. With the recent dramatic increase in cases and hospitalizations, expedited implementation is paramount. In addition, if we can slow the spread of COVID-19 we can hopefully also prevent another lockdown and speed our economic recovery.

As you know, earlier this month the White House Task Force's most recent report recommended increased caution and continued face masks for 10 Wyoming counties. Red zone counties reported were Albany, Big Horn, Campbell, Converse, Goshen, Park and Sublette counties.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Anthony Fauci recently said in an interview to CNN, "Well, if people are not wearing masks, then maybe we should be mandating it."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> White House task force recommended face mask requirements for some Wyoming counties, Casper Star Tribune, October 9, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Fauci, Anthony, Interview with CNN. October 23, 2020.

Our numbers have continued to increase as many have disregarded our recommendations. Education and encouragement alone have not achieved desired outcomes. Our health care resources are becoming critically strained with hospitalizations and deaths increasing. Therefore, we ask you to consider the following:

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, transmitted through person-to-person contact or by contact with surfaces contaminated with the virus. Persons infected with COVID-19 may become symptomatic two to fourteen days after exposure;<sup>3</sup> and

WHEREAS, respiratory droplets from infected individuals are a major mode of SARS-CoV-2 transmission.<sup>4</sup> This understanding is the basis of the recommendations for physical distancing, and of the PPE guidance for healthcare workers.<sup>5</sup> Droplets do not only come from coughing or sneezing: in a-/pre-symptomatic individuals, droplets are generated via talking and breathing;<sup>6</sup> and

WHEREAS, Face Coverings reduce droplet dispersal and cloth-based coverings reduce emission of particles by variable amounts; and

WHEREAS, evidence indicates that wearing Face Coverings reduces the transmissibility per contact by reducing transmission of infected droplets; and

WHEREAS, in the most comprehensive, systematic review and meta-analysis of Face Coverings published to date, Chu et al. found that face masks could reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19 by an expected 85 percent;<sup>7</sup> and

WHEREAS, guidelines published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on April 3, 2020, recommend that all people wear cloth Face Coverings in public settings where other physical distancing measures may be difficult to maintain. CDC also advises the use of simple cloth Face Coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others;<sup>8</sup> and

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<sup>3</sup> United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): How to Protect Yourself & Others*. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html> (Accessed: 6/24/2020).

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization. *2020 Modes of transmission of virus causing COVID-19: implications for IPC precaution recommendations*. Available: <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations>. (Accessed: 05/21/2020)

<sup>5</sup> Public Health England. *2020 COVID-19: infection prevention and control guidance*. Available: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/881489/COVID-19\\_infection\\_prevention\\_and\\_control\\_guidance\\_complete.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881489/COVID-19_infection_prevention_and_control_guidance_complete.pdf) (Accessed: 05/21/2020)

<sup>6</sup> Anfinrud P, Stadnytskyi V, Bax CE, Bax A. 2020 *Visualizing Speech-Generated Oral Fluid Droplets with Laser Light Scattering*. New England Journal of Medicine (doi: [10.1056/NEJMc2007800](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc2007800)).

<sup>7</sup> Chu DK, Akl EA, Duda S, et al. Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis [published online ahead of print, 2020 Jun 1]. *Lancet*. 2020;S0140-6736(20)31142-9. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31142-9

<sup>8</sup> United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19*. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> (Accessed: 6/26/2020).

WHEREAS, the White House Task Force has placed Wyoming in the top 10 states for COVID cases and recommended face masks in our counties;<sup>9</sup>

FURTHERMORE, since COVID-19 positive cases are increasing significantly and the number of deaths this week have spiked;

THEREFORE, we the undersigned duly appointed health officers of each Wyoming county appeal to you to strongly consider adopting an ordinance requiring facemasks similar to the ordinances that Teton and Laramie County have passed and are now being considered elsewhere in the state for the protection of the public good and health of its citizens.

Respectfully,

Wyoming Medical Society

David B. Wheeler, MD, PhD, FAAN, FAES, FAHA  
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