



MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

STRONG MEDICINE FOR MINNESOTA

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March 23, 2020

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Commissioner Jan Malcolm
P.O. BOX 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Dear Governor Walz and Commissioner Malcolm,

The Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians, representing nearly 3,200 family physicians throughout Minnesota, thanks you for your leadership in this very challenging time. We all want what is best for our communities and we are urging you to make a “shelter in place” declaration and shut down all non-essential business in Minnesota for at least two weeks. This time will be valuable in allowing us to get ahead of the expected surge in cases. We need time to continue to strengthen and reinforce our healthcare resources. This declaration is an important next step and will assist in giving us that time.

Minnesota can get ahead and be a national model for flattening the curve and slowing the rate of infection. If we take action now to close non-essential businesses for at least two weeks and discourage people from leaving their homes, we will keep more Minnesotans from getting sick while preserving medical resources and demonstrating what is possible with preventive action. Every person who stays at home and avoids hospitalization is saving medical personnel, medical equipment and hospital beds for someone else who will require help.

Minnesota’s family physicians urge you to consider liquor stores as essential businesses to remain open during this time. People suffering from an addiction to alcohol will withdraw without access. Those withdrawing will need access to our healthcare resources and hospital beds – scarce resources that we cannot afford during this time.

Family physicians are on the front lines of this epidemic in clinics, emergency rooms and hospitals throughout MN. Minnesota’s family physicians make up more than 50% of physicians practicing in small, rural communities and more than 66% of physicians practicing in isolated areas (2017 Overview of the Physician Workforce, Minnesota Department of Health). Nationally, family physicians are the main source of primary health care for the Medicare population and see a large proportion of new Medicaid beneficiaries (February 2018 Physicians’ Economic Impact Study, American Medical Association).

Minnesota family physicians are across the state caring for their communities and helping you care for all Minnesotans.

The full impact of “sheltering in place” is time limited. We urge you to act now. Please take sensible and timely steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Minnesota before we see the surge of infections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R-C MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small "MD" at the end.

Renee Crichlow, MD, FAFP
MAFP President