



URGENT MEMO

Open Letter To:

South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem
South Dakota Legislature
Rapid City Mayor Steve Allendar
Rapid City City Council

With great urgency, the Great Plains Tribal Leader's Health Board (GPTLHB) recommends that local, tribal, and state governments in the Great Plains adopt immediate use of face masks in public settings and explore the adoption of shelter in place directives.

Today, the GPTLHB joins the South Dakota State Medical Association to call for a statewide mask mandate in South Dakota. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) affirms that wearing masks can help communities slow the spread of COVID-19 when worn consistently and correctly by a majority of people in public settings. The GPTLHB urges that all city, county, and state officials in South Dakota immediately implement any measures available to encourage or require face coverings in public settings. We specifically ask Governor Noem to enact a mask mandate to protect all South Dakotans and save lives.

The consistent use of face coverings in public settings reduces transmission of the virus and lessens individual exposure. We believe that elected leadership's actions can normalize proper prevention practices and ensure better health outcomes for our communities.

We also recommend that South Dakotans stay home for all but essential activities. South Dakota has a substantial and uncontrolled community spread of the Coronavirus. To slow the spread of the virus, staying at home is required. Although this may disrupt our usual activities, we all must do our part to protect our communities.

Without immediate action to slow community spread, we risk that our healthcare systems will be overwhelmed. We must support our healthcare heroes as they fight to save lives.

Local, Tribal, and area healthcare organization leaders have united to demand action from our elected officials to help deal with this regionwide public health crisis. The GPTLHB stands by the scientists and researchers who have asked legislatures to enact mandates requiring the use of face masks in public settings.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Church".

Jerilyn Church, MSW, President/CEO
Great Plains Tribal Leader's Health Board & Oyate Health Center

Cheyenne River
Sioux Tribe

Crow Creek
Sioux Tribe

Flandreau Santee
Sioux Tribe

Lower Brule
Sioux Tribe

Mandan, Hidatsa &
Arikara Nation
(Three Affiliated Tribes)

Oglala Sioux Tribe

Omaha Tribe
of Nebraska

Ponca Tribe
of Nebraska

Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Sac & Fox Tribe of the
Mississippi Indians in
Iowa/Meskwaki Nation

Santee Sioux Tribe of
Nebraska

Sisseton-Wahpeton
Oyate of the Lake
Traverse Reservation

Spirit Lake Tribe

Standing Rock
Sioux Tribe

Trenton Indian
Service Area

Turtle Mountain Band
of Chippewa Indians

Winnebago Tribe
of Nebraska

Yankton Sioux Tribe