



Governor Reynolds! Protect the Health and Safety of Iowans

As faith leaders and Iowans of many beliefs, it is with great urgency that we call upon Governor Kim Reynolds to take every action available to protect the health and safety of Iowans and to drastically reduce the positive cases of COVID-19 that is raging in communities across Iowa.

The number of positive cases in Iowa is out of control. If the state's leaders do not take strong and quick actions, many more Iowans will be become ill, some will suffer long-term consequences, and others will die.

On Wednesday, November 11, Iowa reported 4764 new infections, giving a positivity rate of 48%. There were 26 additional deaths bringing the total number of Iowans who have died of COVID-19 to 1898. Over the previous 24 hours, 230 Iowans were hospitalized bringing the total number of those currently receiving hospital care because of COVID-19 to 1190.

Hospitals, including intensive care units, are filling at a record pace. Critical surgeries are being postponed and patients are travelling out of state for essential care.

The current rate of spread in the state is not sustainable. If predictions hold, we could see double the number of persons who test positive and also Iowans who are hospitalized with COVID-19 by Thanksgiving. As this pandemic rages, our healthcare system will continue to be stressed and our healthcare workers will continue to be overworked and placed at even more risk for becoming infected themselves. We owe them better.

The message that has been delivered time and again for months is that Iowans will do the right thing. It is clear that message is not working. The exploding numbers demand more concrete action. It is past time to adopt the mandates recommended by our nation's experts.

The White House Coronavirus Task Force has implored the leaders of our state, particularly Governor Reynolds, to take quick and rigorous action to curb the extreme rise in positive cases and to reduce the increased hospitalization rate of COVID-19 cases that are stressing our healthcare system. The Governor has announced some limited actions but not the full range of steps necessary to reduce the alarming rate of growth in Iowa's cases.

We implore our Governor to immediately take action and implement the recommendations of the Task Force including:

- Mandate Iowans wear a mask in public.
- Prohibit all social gatherings beyond the immediate household.
- Increase testing availability in communities across the state.
- Mandate weekly testing of teachers, community college students, staff in crowded places, and hospital personnel.
- Limit indoor restaurant capacity to less than 50% and restrict hours until the number of cases and test positivity is reduced.
- Mandate masks be worn by students and teachers in K-12 schools.

It is well documented that the toll of the pandemic extends far beyond the infection itself, including loneliness, depression, and financial hardship. Small businesses -- truly small business -- have been especially hard hit with a disproportionate impact on businesses owned by people of color. As such, we recommend Governor Reynolds take the bold action of providing economic relief to small businesses owned and operated by Iowans, with particular attention given to small businesses from communities of color.

The state of Iowa is failing to protect our elders, healthcare workers, teachers, children, neighbors, and each of us. It is time that our state's leaders, beginning with our Governor, do the right thing.

As faith leaders and Iowans of many beliefs, we call upon Governor Kim Reynolds to take every action available to protect the health and safety of Iowans amidst the pandemic that is raging in communities across Iowa. Further, we call on all civic, educational, and business leaders to immediately implement all of the recommendations of the White House Coronavirus Task Force to dramatically reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is time for all Iowans to step up to meet this crisis.

Signed by,

[Attached]