



March 20, 2020

Healthcare Stakeholders,

These are truly unprecedented times and MNA is going to be extremely bold here. As California has ordered all residents to stay home and New York is in a total crisis along with others who have had to call in the National Guard, I am hearing from these nurses and nurse associations from many other states and the conditions are deplorable. Please consider, as our state does not (nor any state for that matter) have the testing ability to accurately wrap our arms around this virus and the community spread, encourage our Governor to order our state of Montana residents to stay home (shelter in place) and close all non-essential businesses until further notice.

Being realistic, let's prepare now for the next school year. Let's prepare now for the number of infected patients to double every 4 days as is currently happening in Ohio. This is in no way going to resolve soon (and certainly not by March 27, 2020) and MNA is advocating for extreme measures to best combat a virus we are not prepared to adequately test for nor are we staffed for and most importantly, have the PPE and ventilator resources for, due to lack of supplies. As we learn new evidence from this virus hourly, we have an opportunity to (hopefully) jump way ahead of the curve, as the Governor did in closing schools and again today with his new directive. One week is not enough as we have not even begun to experience the gravity from this virus.

WE must act now to mitigate the spread of this Coronavirus (Covid-19). Already nurses in the state are calling our professional association multiple times per day as masks are being rationing and there are not near enough N-95 masks. MNA places no blame on the employers or the state, it is what we ALL have been dealt with and with that said, need drastic action.

Nurses and other healthcare workers are afraid and feel unsupported. It is known that social distancing is paramount. The quicker we act the more Montana lives we save. We are all in this together and if more people stay home, we will have less spread, less patents, and less need to continue to risk our frontline nurses, doctors, and healthcare workers and most importantly, our communities. Thank you in advance for this consideration.

Most Sincerely and Respectfully,

Vicky Byrd, MSN, RN

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