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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

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December 3, 2020

Mr. Bill McBride
Executive Director
National Governors Association
Hall of States
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 267
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. McBride:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I write to express our appreciation for the National Governors Association's (NGA) leadership in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governors have played a critical role in the nation's response efforts and have demonstrated leadership in protecting physicians and other health care professionals by enabling access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and lifting administrative and technological barriers to care for patients with COVID-19. Moreover, governors have protected the public by taking action to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through community mitigation strategies.

As COVID-19 cases surge and the virus continues to devastate communities across the country, I write to ask for NGA's support in urging the public to follow science- and evidence-based guidance to protect themselves and their loved ones: wear a mask, practice physical distancing, and frequently wash hands. These three simple steps are among the few effective interventions available at this time to slow the exponential spread of the virus across all states. As physicians, we are honored to serve and put our lives on the front line to protect our patients and communities, but we need the public's help as we take on this immense challenge. Individual actions, in addition to policy changes, are necessary to avoid overwhelming our health care systems and depleting the equipment, resources, and manpower needed to care for the influx of critically ill patients. Unfortunately, misinformation, particularly regarding mask wearing, has spread alongside the virus.

The AMA has undertaken significant efforts to normalize mask wearing in the fight against COVID-19. In August, the AMA launched the #MaskUp campaign, a robust effort to encourage mask wearing among the public and to debunk myths associated with masks. The [campaign](#) includes messaging, social media engagement, FAQs on masks and COVID-19, myth-busters on some of the common misconceptions and misinformation around masks, and continued AMA news stories on COVID-19. These tools equip patients with evidence-based information and help physicians reinforce the need for masks.

Our #MaskUp campaign followed an important collaboration between AMA, American Hospital Association, and American Nurses Association on a [public service announcement](#) (PSA) urging the American public to take three simple steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19: wear a mask, practice physical distancing, and wash hands frequently. Physicians, nurses, and hospital and health systems leaders have been joined by researchers and public health experts in this important call to action.

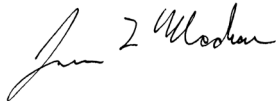
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Most recently, the AMA announced a new national [PSA](#) that has been made available to the media. We are partnering with state medical societies on state-specific videos for deployment on social media. The newest PSAs reemphasize the importance of hand washing, physical distancing, and mask wearing.

We invite NGA to join our public call to action or, in the alternative, assist us in extending this invitation to interested governors across the country. COVID-19 respects no geographic, demographic, or ideological boundaries. Therefore, a uniform response to the pandemic across all states is critical to turn the tide against COVID-19. The science is clear that wearing a mask, physical distancing, and regularly washing hands are key to reducing the spread. It is imperative that the public hear this message from trusted voices.

The AMA stands ready to assist NGA and governors across the country in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate. Please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org to discuss ways that our two organizations can work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James L. Madara".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Chair
The Honorable Asa Hutchinson, Vice Chair