

North Dakota Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN® 

North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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Minnesota Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN® 

Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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South Dakota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN SOUTH DAKOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN® 

South Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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Governor Doug Burgum, Governor Kristi Noem, Governor Tim Walz;

We write to you on behalf of the nearly 2 million children and adolescents in our states, acting as their advocates in the midst of a pandemic that has changed the face of their childhood and adolescence and altered the prospect of their futures. We are pediatricians represented by separate state chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics, but our care and concern for children and adolescents knows no state boundary lines. Therefore, we are reaching out to plead for your help in taking action against the staggering spread of COVID-19 cases in all three of our states.

As pediatricians, we are deeply concerned about increased spread throughout the holidays, resulting in a substantial number of children who may become sick, hospitalized or asymptomatic carriers. Additionally, increased spread will have a ripple effect on health care, childcare and education communities. Indeed, all families and every community, will be deeply impacted.

North Dakota and South Dakota currently have the two highest rates of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 children in the country and Minnesota is 10th in the country.

In spite of all of this, we can offer good news: children and adolescents are resilient and grown-ups have the power to make a difference. In the hopes of keeping all our children in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota safe and ultimately be able to attend school in person, which we know is the best way for them to learn and thrive, we ask that you deliver this simple set of powerful instructions to our citizens as we head into the holidays:

- **Stick with the basics.** Go out only for the essentials, wear a mask, keep your distance from others while you are out, and wash your hands. We know these practices work to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.
- **Limit contact outside your immediate household.** Socialize with only the members of your household. It's tempting to want to include our extended family members in our plans because they feel safe and comforting during uncertain times, but doing so actually increases the risk that someone (little or grown) will get COVID-19 from that gathering.
- **Be creative.** Find ways to make the holidays special while observing disease prevention measures. Engage your children in the brainstorming, whether it is a virtual holiday play for loved ones, a surprise snowman left in the front yard, or cookie decorating online. Kids and teens are creative and adaptable.

Pediatricians are still here for you and strongly recommend that children continue to come in for their regular check-ups and vaccinations to stay healthy. If you think your child is sick, call your pediatrician to determine the best next step.

As medical experts and child advocates, we stand ready to support your direction with these methods, and other ways that mitigate the spread of this devastating disease in our states.

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