



ROSS F. GOLDBERG, MD
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LIBBY MCDANNELL, CAE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

July 9, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Jen Marson, Executive Director
Arizona Sheriffs' Association
1910 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Dear Ms. Marson,

I hope this letter finds you well and staying safe. On behalf of the nearly 4000 Arizona physicians the Arizona Medical Association (ArMA) represents, I am writing to urge the sheriffs of the Arizona Sheriffs' Association to support efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, including enforcing face mask requirements that fall under their jurisdiction.

In making this request, we certainly understand law enforcement already has many important duties, and public health mandates might seem a low priority. However, we respectfully want to impress upon Arizona sheriffs that the COVID-19 pandemic now surging throughout our state is no different than any other public emergency that threatens lives. Without the support of community leaders, including law enforcement, more Arizonans will be at risk, and more will die.

As I am sure you know, this virus is real. As of the date of this letter, Arizona's COVID-19 infection rates have surged tremendously in the last several weeks. We have received unflattering national attention about this. So far, over 108,000 Arizonans have been infected with the virus, and 1,963 have died from the disease. The virus shows no signs of slowing down, and no treatment or vaccination presently exists to stop it.

With regard to face mask requirements, the simple act of properly wearing a face mask a can have a tremendous positive effect in slowing the spread of the virus. Some citizens may not appreciate this scientific fact, some may not care, or some tout personal freedoms instead. Law enforcement personnel know that freedom does not give one the right to harm an innocent person, and that is exactly what occurs when someone spreads the virus to someone else – perhaps with fatal consequences. This is where the sheriffs of Arizona can make a huge life-saving impact by enforcing local laws and more importantly, using their influence in the community to expressly support and publicly model law-abiding behavior.

Again, we deeply appreciate the efforts our sheriffs and their teams take to protect and serve all of us, and we understand that enforcement of public health laws such as a mask requirement adds another burden. But I would be failing in my obligation as President of ArMA if I did not point out the tremendous stress this pandemic has had on physicians and the entire healthcare system as well.

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ARMA

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Arizona hospital capacity is at the tipping point, and the state is now looking for additional doctors and other healthcare professionals from out-of-state to address shortages and provide care. We are all overworked and in a situation nobody wants to be in. The only way we can recover, save as many lives as possible, and return to our pre-pandemic existence is if we work together and support one another. I truly hope this is possible.

Thank you for considering my plea. My best wishes for the continued health and safety of you and all your members, and should you have any questions or desire any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ross F. Goldberg, MD, FACS

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