



November 24, 2020

To the Honorable Tate Reeves, Governor of Mississippi

We thank you for your leadership and commitment to healthcare in Mississippi. The Covid-19 crisis continues to plague our state. Sadly, Mississippi's healthcare system is again overwhelmed by COVID-19, just as it was this summer. The data shows that the statewide mask mandate you instituted on August 4 worked well, and we are asking that you institute it again. Thanksgiving is this week, and we know that our cases and hospitalizations will continue to rise throughout the holiday season. A statewide mask mandate is vital to maintain the integrity of our healthcare system, and we ask that you issue one by executive order through the end of the year.

On November 22, Mississippi had 910 patients in the hospital with confirmed COVID-19 infection and another 104 with suspected infection. For the first time since August, we have over 1,000 suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients in Mississippi hospitals. Our hospitals are at capacity, and our ICUs are full. Physicians are actively transferring patients out of Mississippi for care.

When your office instituted the first statewide mask mandate on August 4, Mississippi was averaging about 1,100 new cases per day. When the mandate was lifted on September 30, that number was down to around 500 cases per day. Mississippi is currently averaging approximately 1,200 new cases per day. The statewide mask mandate, which was highly effective, needs to be reinstated.

The upcoming winter is going to be difficult for Mississippians. We know that wearing masks will help us continue to grow our economy, allow kids to remain in school, parents to go to work, and most importantly, protect all Mississippians from this deadly virus. Physicians from across Mississippi ask that you reinstitute a statewide mask mandate. We thank you for your consideration on this important issue and support in protecting Mississippians during this healthcare crisis.

Anita Henderson, MD  
President Elect, MS Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics

LouAnn Woodward, MD  
Vice Chancellor, University of Mississippi Medical Center

Claude Brunson, MD  
Executive Director, Mississippi State Medical Association

James Griffin, Jr., MD  
President, Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians