

IOWA DD Council

Preparation, Participation, Power

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The Honorable Kim Reynolds
Governor, State of Iowa
Iowa State Capital
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Governor Reynolds,

The Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council's mission is to create change with and for persons with developmental disabilities so they can live, work, learn and play in the community of their choosing. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges for Iowans with developmental disabilities, who often have underlying chronic medical conditions that put them in a higher risk category than the general population and make them more susceptible to serious outcomes when contracting the virus. In addition, people who have limited mobility may not be able to maintain safe distancing from others who are not following public health guidance while in the community.

People with disabilities are often dependent on physical supports, for instance transportation, supervision and personal cares. As Iowa responded to the pandemic, people with disabilities counted on the people around them to exercise caution and follow the recommended social distancing precautions. As the state lessened the initial precautions, Iowans with disabilities expressed increased anxiety about possible exposure to people with the COVID-19, particularly those who are asymptomatic. Unfortunately, people in many areas of the state continue to ignore public health guidance, putting Iowans with underlying health conditions at greater risk.

To provide further protections for Iowans with disabilities, the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council respectfully ask that you reconsider your position and issue a proclamation requiring masks to be worn in public areas. Masks protect both the person wearing the mask and others in close proximity. As a Council we educate and advocate for both the caregiver and the person served to wear masks while in each other's presence. We also feel that requiring a mask while in public all of the time, is a necessary precaution to protect people who are vulnerable due to pre-existing conditions.

Our Council's self and family advocates believe that a statewide mask mandate would provide additional needed protection and reduce the added stress placed on individuals with disabilities and their families and caregivers. The Council wants to thank you for your leadership in these unprecedented times and hopes that you will consider this request for a mask mandate. We would welcome a discussion on this policy, to share our concerns but also to learn how we can continue to support Iowans disabilities to *safely* live, work, learn and play in their communities of choice.

Sincerely,

Brooke Lovelace

Brooke Lovelace
Executive Director

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