



April 14, 2021

The Honorable Tim Walz  
Governor of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz,

We write to you again today with an urgent request for you to reconsider your regulations in Executive Order 20-99 requiring youth, aged eighteen and younger, to wear a face covering while participating in sporting events, particularly outdoor sporting events and recreational activity. With warmer weather quickly approaching, many children will be preparing to participate in outdoor sports and recreational activities. Extensive research and data demonstrate that there is almost no transmission of COVID-19 outside and among children. What little transmission does occur in these circumstances will only continue to steadily decrease as mass-vaccinations continue and precautions on the sidelines and among spectators are followed. Furthermore, as cited in our previous letter to you on January 6, face coverings during youth sporting events pose a potential health risk to participants.

Dr. Jill Foster of the University of Minnesota reported to MinnPost in March that aerosol droplets from a contagious person may float around indoors and increase transmission. However, in outdoor settings, these droplets are immediately diluted, blown away, and broken up by the rush of ever-circulating air.<sup>1</sup>

Multiple studies further support this notion. For example, professors from the United Kingdom “found very few examples of outdoor transmission of COVID-19 in everyday life...suggesting a very low risk.”<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Department of Health’s own data shows very limited instances of transmission in connection to outdoor events as well. In fact, of the few studies where cases had been linked to outdoor gatherings, all instances of transmission included circumstances where of some of the time at the gathering had also been spent indoors, suggesting that transmission most likely occurred indoors.

The World Health Organization (“WHO”) states “children should not wear a mask when playing sports or doing physical activity, such as running, jumping or playing on the playground so that it doesn’t compromise their breathing.”<sup>3</sup> Wearing a mask that covers a child’s nose and mouth during high intensity exercise could lead to fainting, hyperventilation, or vomiting. This potential risk will increase in warmer temperatures. Further, the general nature of outdoor sports and recreation is fast paced, thus continuous movement by participants results in limited extended exposure to others. As presented above, this guidance, along with multiple studies reflecting the lowlihood of outdoor transmission, demonstrates that there is no sensible reason for our youth to wear masks when participating in outdoor activity.

You have cited the State’s low rate of infection and high vaccinations as reason for relaxing occupancy limits on restaurants, business, and entertainment venues. We ask you to use the same logic to withdraw guidelines requiring Minnesota’s youth to wearing face coverings while participating in outdoor sports and recreation.

We urge you to follow the guidance of leading Health organizations and remove the mask mandate for youth sports. This regulation is not only unnecessarily burdensome for Minnesota’s youth and their families, but also is ineffective against the spread of COVID-19.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.minnpost.com/greater-minnesota/2021/03/minnesotans-are-heading-outside-again-so-how-low-are-the-risks-for-outdoor-transmission-of-covid-19/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/medrxiv/early/2020/09/10/2020.09.04.20188417.1.full.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19>

Sincerely,



Representative Kristin Robbins



Representative Dave Baker



Representative Sondra Erickson



Representative Matt Grossell



Representative Shane Mekeland



Representative Tama Theis



Representative Brian Daniels



Representative Peggy Bennett



Representative Paul Novotny



Representative Spencer Igo



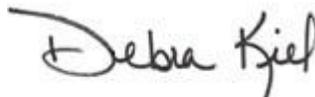
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