



## **Senate Political Subdivisions**

### **HB 1323**

**April 1, 2021**

Chairman Burckhard and Committee Members, I am Courtney Koebele, the Executive Director of the North Dakota Medical Association. The North Dakota Medical Association is the professional membership organization for North Dakota physicians, residents, and medical students.

NDMA stands in OPPOSITION of HB 1323.

HB 1323 strips the government's public health intervention authority to help protect our public in the most crucial times – during a pandemic – when situations are critical, and people are dying from wide-spread disease.

Even though compelling evidence continues to grow on mask effectiveness and stopping the spread, some members of the public may lack understanding of how disease spreads and choose to not follow proper interventions. And for some, it becomes a political stance.

We must trust that our public health system is not political but stands for the best interest of the public. Furthermore, we cannot let political fortitude stand in the way of overall public health during pandemic times.

To fight a pandemic, it takes cooperation by everyone to bring the crisis under control. For COVID-19, it included social distancing, hand washing, contract tracing and masking – critical components to stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Throughout the course of the pandemic, NDMA took a strong position in support of all science-based solutions to stop the spread of COVID-19 - which included wearing masks. The next crisis may call for another set of interventions needed to protect the public's health. Mask requirements may

or may not be one of the interventions, depending on the pandemic or crisis.

With that being said, NDMA stands to support public health actions that lead to results in preventing death and illness during a time of pandemic and crisis. For this reason, we ask that we do not create roadblocks in the best interest of public health.

VOTE NO ON HB 1323.

Respectfully,

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