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July 14, 2020

Mayor Bynum and the Honorable Members of the Tulsa City Council
175 East 2nd Street, 4th Floor
Tulsa, OK 74103

Re: Face Covering Ordinance Response to COVID-19

Dear Mayor Bynum and Tulsa City Council Members:

On behalf of the nearly 4,000 physician and medical student members of the Oklahoma State Medical Association, we wish to thank you for your service as a member of the Tulsa City Council and Mayor. The duties and responsibilities in which you have accepted are very much appreciated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social responsibilities are of utmost importance. As physicians and practitioners, we feel one of the most important duties of our elected officials is to protect our citizens. As such, we urge you to support an ordinance requiring the wearing of masks in public places.

As the economy continues to struggle through efforts to re-open access to private businesses, the State of Oklahoma is in an acceleration phase of COVID-19 cases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the widespread use of cloth face coverings helps prevent the transmission of COVID-19. This is done by reducing the spread of this virus through water-based droplets when infected individuals, many of whom are asymptomatic showing no signs of being ill talk, cough, or sneeze.

In the prestigious Lancet medical journal dated June 27th, 2020, a peer-review of 172 studies found that "face mask use could result in a large reduction in risk of infection." After considering and evaluating the most current information about the COVID-19 virus, as physicians and practitioners that serve our community, we stand to support all persons within the City of Tulsa being required to wear a facial covering properly. We also continue to encourage social distancing (6-foot parameter) and properly washing or sanitizing hands often.

Oklahoma and its communities have three options, none of which are desirable. At one end of the spectrum is another wave of lockdowns and a shutdown of the economy. At the other is the untold sickness and death that will be caused by letting this disease go unchecked. Mask usage is the middle ground that will help keep us from having to choose between those two extremes.

We respectfully urge your support for an ordinance requiring the wearing of masks in public places.

Sincerely,

George Monks, MD, President
Oklahoma State Medical Association