



November 3, 2021

Charlie and all,

I am reaching out on behalf of nurses across Montana to formally request a meeting with the Governor's office.

As a healthcare leader in our state, Montana Nurses Association (MNA) was disappointed in the two press releases yesterday regarding investing in out-of-state nurses and healthcare workers. To our knowledge, NO nurse nor the MNA, the state's professional nurse association, was asked to provide feedback regarding this important announcement and action. Montana nurses are critical stakeholders and crucial to the function of our healthcare system--Nurses should speak to nurse issues.

MNA has advocated for investment in our existing public health staff during the 2021 legislature (Letter To Editor {LTE} March 29, 2021) and recently (see attached ask 9.7.2021) to Director Meier, moreover, MNA continues to advocate for our nurses and healthcare workforce on the ground (see attached public comment statement to the Legislative Finance Committee {LFC}).

Since July 29, 2021, MNA has not received any meaningful responses from the Gianforte administration to our numerous requests to schedule time to discuss nurses' concerns/solutions surrounding the current pandemic and public health crisis. MNA would again like to request a meeting with the administration as soon as possible. Please let us know what additional information or process is needed to get this meeting scheduled.

- **July 29, 2021:** *Can we kindly make an appointment (max 60 minutes) with Governor Gianforte, Lt. Governor Juras, and yourself regarding nurses in Montana and covid?*
- **August 5, 2021:** *Can you kindly let us know the Governor and LT. Governor next available time that we could meet along with Charlie as this is of an urgent matter.*
- **August 11, 2021:** *This...please, we do not want to become "Florida, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oregon" all have more people hospitalized with COVID-19 than at any other point in the pandemic, and nursing staffs are badly strained. MNA would like to have the Governor and Lt. Governor publicly support our public health officials and the science and evidence based data and simply ask everyone in Montana to get vaccinated (for those that are able to), outside of that (as we await FDA approval of Covid vaccine) simply ask citizens and visitors to please wear a mask especially if unvaccinated, and kindly wear a mask (vaccinated or not) in public areas. WE can lead not follow!*



- **August 26, 2021:** *As Health Care Policy Advisor for Governor Gianforte, I am kindly asking on behalf of MNA, for a meeting with you and our Governor and Lt. Governor (and other appropriate stakeholders from this administration) to discuss covid and the nurses public health challenges and health (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual) challenges of our nursing workforce as it directly affects our patients, our community, and our state. Please refer to the previous emails (7/29/2021 and 8/5/2021 to Anna and 8/11/2021), MNA would welcome the opportunity to assist this administration always. This remains urgent as our covid numbers and hospitalizations are increasing. Just today our MNA staff had to cancel our “in-person” convention that was to be held in October as the risk is far too great due to the current covid public health crisis.*
- **August 26, 2021:** *Article below from our national, ANA, (American Nurses Association), pediatric cases of covid are surging...Lets be better, lead us through this very real pandemic, we are here to help. With school starting we need to encourage masks, such a simple thing to do to keep them in school and as safe as possible.*
- **September 7, 2021:** *We cannot “wish” or ignore this virus away. We compromise our children (not to mention our MT citizens) every day we do not embrace sound science and data and dismiss our public health experts. Our nurses, and healthcare workers, as you have seen in local papers, are maxed out as are our facilities. We need leadership to get our state through this crisis. MNA is here to help. Please.*
- **September 14, 2021:** *MNA is hearing from many nurses and just this week and today, we need your leadership, help, support and MNA is here to help you succeed as well. National Guard, as I am sure you are aware, is not the solution, but an attempt to assist with the issue instead of what we really need is to actually deal with the source (Covid) as covid beds/ICU admits/ventilations are increasing among the non-vaccinated. Please think about the many citizens who will not get proper care (e.g. ...trauma/elective surgery/heart attacks) due to covid beds overwhelming our MT facilities. MNA wants our state and our patient (which in this case is the entire MT population) safe, educated with evidence based public health facts, and our citizens able to work for our businesses/healthcare employers with good health and safe working conditions. MNA respectfully requests a time to communicate concerns and solutions related to Nurses and covid. Please.*



- **September 21, 2021:** Phone call to Charlie Brereton, left message to kindly request a meeting. (no response)
- **September 21, 2021:** MNA is disheartened that we are not receiving any communication from you or the current administration. We have been asking for weeks for an appointment to discuss Nurses in Montana and Covid. Our public health response is dismal at best and we want to help and support this administration to do better. I communicate often with our professional nurse members (RNs and APRNs) and what should I tell them? ...that the Governor's office has continued to ignore our requests for a meeting to discuss what is happening on the ground level? These are not my personal concerns, although as a lifelong Montanan and a MT registered nurse for 33 years, much of my concerns align with our professional nurse members that MNA hears from across our state, multiple times, day and night, and I cannot reassure them our Governor or administration has their backs. Wearing a mask is the most easy, **NON INVASIVE** step we can take. Nothing is 100% but we know it will help slow this virus down, that is non debatable. MT is now one of, if not the top, per capita covid cases. By not attending to our patient, which in this case is the entire MT population, with accurate information and education (science evidence based data) surrounding this virus, we are compromising and sacrificing lives every day. Code of Ethics for Nurses requires us to advocate for our patient as our primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population. Please respond.
- **November 3, 2021:** MNA timeline requesting a meeting regarding nurses and covid emailed to Governor, Lt. Governor, Health Policy advisor, and Gianforte Admin staff. Included MNA Public comment to LFC 11.2.2021 and LTE regarding HB 632.

Montana Nurses Association aims to offer input into solutions and a real “on the ground” perspective/experience to the administration from nurses in Montana, especially in such a critical time as this. Montana is experiencing such devastation related to the global pandemic. Please be in touch regarding how this crucial conversation can be initiated.

Most Sincerely,

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