

As both a practicing physician and a mayor in the great state of North Dakota, I must express my opposition towards House Concurrent Resolution 3007. Maintaining a state of emergency in North Dakota at this time ensures Governor Burgum has the authority and powers needed to properly mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus within the state of North Dakota. The state of emergency allows the Governor's office the flexibility and mobility to respond to the fluid and dynamic pandemic as quickly and effectively as possible.

Orders from the state level regarding masking, building capacity and hours of operation have been tremendously effective in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and protecting lives throughout 2020 and the beginning of this year. Those orders, which come from the Governor, carry with them a certain weight garnering greater compliance and a more unified response from residents and businesses. Those orders may need modification to prevent upward trends or respond to promising trends as we near vaccination and the pandemic finish line.

Ending the state of emergency may also have financial ramifications for the state, as it has provided emergency aid money from the federal level. Prematurely ending the state of emergency may potentially cut off access to additional aid, even as we remain in a costly battle with a pandemic.

It is vitally important to remember that this emergency is like no other the State of North Dakota has faced. In an emergency such as a flood, a clear beginning and end date exist. This pandemic, however, is impossible to forecast. We have all received strong medical advice from public health experts to remain diligent as we march towards the end of this pandemic. This virus has ebbed and flowed since it first came to North Dakota in March. We must be prepared as a state to respond to a surge before vaccination are readily available. There will be a day soon which a state of emergency is no longer needed to ensure the safety of every person in North Dakota, but until that day comes, it should remain in place.

- **Dr. Timothy J. Mahoney**, *Fargo Mayor*