



City of Tacoma

Mayor Victoria Woodards

May 5, 2020

Honorable Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

First, we want to open by thanking you for your steady, bipartisan leadership and credible, data-informed decision making as you chart Washington's path forward. While the quality of our leaders always influence outcomes, their impacts are even more pronounced in times of crisis. Washington is lucky to have you and the State's team of experts at the helm.

Because of the swift actions you have taken to put into place scientifically-backed interventions, we are now seeing the curve of COVID-19 cases flatten and decrease in many areas of the State. Our medical providers have faithfully served at the front lines of this crisis, and they have done so at a cost – both to themselves as well as to those Washington residents who are in need of those procedures not considered urgent or essential at this time. Leaders in the non-profit medical systems that provide crucial services and employment across Tacoma and our region, have expressed a desire to see Proclamation 20-24, Restrictions on Non-Urgent Medical Procedures, fully lifted so that our hospitals and health care systems can return to their work of caring for everyone in our State who has health care needs.

In writing you on this issue, we want to acknowledge and show our appreciation for the additional guidance issued on April 29, 2020 that expands some allowable medical care procedures. We know this has had real benefits in our community. Additionally, we would like to urge you to seek additional ways to provide the medical sector confidence that they have the autonomy they need to make appropriate clinical decisions about necessary patient care.

The extensive shut-down of our State has had a significant positive impact on the spread of COVID-19. It has also had a significant impact on our economy and now threatens our population's health. As you look to safely start Washington's economy, we request that you consider adding to your plan details that address the need to reopen all functions of our State's medical care facilities. With the current restrictions in place, patients are leaving health concerns untreated. This is having negative impacts to people's health status. In some cases, those impacts are significant and potentially irreparable. Decreased restrictions would also counter the fear and stigma that have arisen around health care facilities during the COVID-19 outbreak. By lifting restrictions, you can help counter the rumors that hospitals and other health care facilities in our State are not safe places to go for care. You can help turn back this chilling message that can, in some cases, threaten lives.

Modern hospitals and health care facilities are, by design, well prepared to appropriately care for patients with infectious illness while caring for — and keeping safe — scores of patients who require care for other illnesses and injuries. In doing this work, they expertly employ appropriate infection prevention measures, use personal protective equipment and otherwise engage in evidence-based practices to do the work they need to do to serve our communities.

Our medical service providers indicate that they are well positioned to manage any future surges in COVID-19 cases. We ask you to put your trust in the health services of Washington and work with them to resume all aspects of their business safely.

Thank you again for your leadership and, as always, your willingness to hear from local governments throughout this crisis. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions on this or if there are other ways that Tacoma can support you as we navigate the pandemic response together.

Yours in Service,

ALL MAYOR / COUNCIL SIGNATURE BLOCKS HERE UPON APPROVAL