April 6, 2020

City Council Members of Rapid City:

Thank you for your leadership in these unprecedented times. We recognize and respect the difficult decisions you’re making and the impact on our local economy.

One of the biggest challenges we face as we prepare for the local COVID-19 impact is predicting how many people in our region will be infected, how many will require hospitalization, and how many will need to be placed on ventilators. We have worked with Governor Noem and the other health systems in South Dakota to develop statewide projections. Based on this work, Governor Noem shared on Friday that COVID-19 infections are expected to peak in mid-June and could require up to 5,000 hospital beds and 1,300 ventilators across the state.

Monument Health physicians and leaders have developed a systemwide capacity surge plan that includes eight phases of response. Overall, we’re preparing to add up to 800 hospital beds in a phased approach, as needed. Governor Noem has authorized the South Dakota National Guard to assist with our preparation efforts and we’re thankful for this support. Once we’ve maximized our Monument Health clinical space, we have plans to extend operations off-campus.

Much has been done in our communities to slow the spread of this disease and we’re encouraged by the results of those actions. Our greatest hope is that we don’t need what we’re preparing for. You can help impact our reality - the actions you take now will impact how this disease spreads in our communities.

The threat is real. Our predictive models show that without continued, or even more aggressive intervention, severe cases of this virus could overwhelm our capacity to deliver care to everyone who needs it.

We see community members innovating and banding together in these difficult times. These acts of community reinforce our belief that we will get through this, together.

Our message to the community: we’re preparing for you – please stay home for us.

Paulette Davidson  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Monument Health

Brad Archer, M.D.  
Chief Medical Officer  
Monument Health