



The Honorable Pete Meitzner
Board of County Commissioners of Sedgwick County
525 N Main, Suite 320
Wichita, Kansas 67202

April 24, 2020

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board of County Commissioners of Sedgwick County:

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and our 1,700 members, thank you for your leadership as you navigate this unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. We remain strongly committed to collaborating with you as we pursue success for our members, leadership for our community, and prosperity for our region.

We are writing to offer our strong support for reigniting the economy of the Wichita region.

We are encouraged by the data we have seen and the prospects for many south central Kansas businesses to open their doors again, even as we stay vigilant in taking precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you for sharing preliminary information with the Chamber's Executive Committee regarding Sedgwick County's phased approach for loosening restrictions on businesses. We support this phased approach.

However, as you analyze metrics and data to determine phase progressions, we encourage you to look at the complete picture the data is painting. We offer our thanks for the work already done, as well as encouragement to you to continue, to ensure that the data used to make policy decisions is transparent and contextual.

In the "Health Recovery Plan" presented by the Health Department at your meeting on April 22, a "14 day window of decreased viral activity" is listed as a criterion required to move from "Phase 1: Slow the Spread" to "Phase 2: Loosening Restrictions." As has been discussed by others, as testing increases the total number of cases will also continue to increase. Thus, our suggestion is that you look at the rate of cases in Sedgwick County and not just the total number of cases.

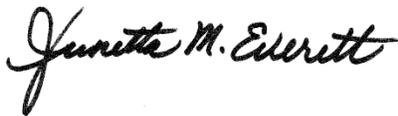
County Manager Tom Stolz stated to our Executive Committee that hospital utilization rates are a key metric in determining whether we are flattening the curve. We agree that hospital

utilization is a crucial data point for our response to COVID-19. The business community will continue to support our friends in the healthcare industry who are working every day to obtain the appropriate supply of testing kits, PPE, ventilators, and ICU beds so that they can restore the sick back to good health.

Finally, we ask that you seek to empower businesses to be responsible for decisions and best practices they need to implement to make their workplaces safe. Businesses are well-equipped to understand how they can ensure the safety of their employees and customers. We are excited about the opportunities to implement best practices drawn from industry leaders, the CDC, KDHE, and the Sedgwick County Health Department. We welcome and anticipate your guidance and suggestions in this area, and rest assured that we will take you up on your offer to our members to consider industry recommendations as well. Your goals to keep the public healthy and safe are well-aligned with the business community's incentives to return to work, employ people in the community, and serve customers and clients.

Thank you for your consideration of our thoughts and suggestions during this process. Commission Chairman Pete Meitzner and County Manager Tom Stolz have been very approachable leading up to this critical decision point, as have the other Commissioners and key county staff. We believe that the decisions you make in the coming weeks can be smart and safe while still addressing the critical challenges businesses and workers are facing right now. COVID-19 has destroyed the lives and livelihoods of many in our community, but we will work to restore them. It has brought many employers to their knees, but we will rise stronger than ever. It has extinguished growth in south central Kansas, but **together we will reignite the region's economy**.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Junetta M. Everett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Junetta Everett

Chair

Board of Directors, Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce