

**To: Ravalli County Commissioners and Sheriff**

**Date: July 23, 2020**

I want to thank Governor Steve Bullock for his recent mandate for Montanans to mask up. It gave me great comfort that it's no longer a choice. If you're going to go out in public: "No shoes, no shirt, no mask, no service."

However, I live in Hamilton, and was distressed to learn the Ravalli County Commissioners and Sheriff have chosen to ignore the mandate (ie the science) and have declared it's up to the individual "opinion." I also learned that Commissioner Jeff Burrows, who is the chair of the Ravalli County HEALTH Board, said at a public meeting last week, "Look, I'm not wearing a mask, I'm not afraid of Covid."

It is inconceivable to me that the elected leaders of our county are not following prudent guidelines mandated by the governor and supported by public health officials. I believe this is in direct violation of your duties as elected officials to protect the health and safety of our citizens and communities.

Yesterday I submitted a letter to the editor to both of our local papers. The letter is copied in below, although edited so it's written to you, rather than the public.

Please, Commissioners and Sheriff, Ravalli County needs you to undo these wrongs, and enforce the directive issued by Governor Bullock to keep our communities safe and healthy. It's your duty as elected officials.

Thank you,  
Amy Monteith, Hamilton, MT

**Regarding the loss of Public Health Director Dr. Carol Calderwood as reported in the Ravalli Republic newspaper on 7/20/20:**

What a tragic and unnecessary loss for Ravalli County, due to the short-sighted leadership of the County Commissioners and Sheriff.

Your disrespect for public health professionals during a global pandemic, and your poor choices have put all of our communities and citizens at risk. If you want to stop the spread of Covid-19, keep our local businesses open, and have schools be able to open for the well-being of students, families, teachers and support staff, you would follow Governor Steve Bullock's mandate to "Mask Up Montana."

The Commissioners and Sheriff must answer to the community and right your wrongs immediately. Just when we were feeling a little more comfortable going into and supporting our local businesses because people would be wearing masks, it is distressing to learn the mandate won't be enforced consistently in Ravalli County. Do the commissioners and sheriff WANT the virus spread to be reduced? Do the commissioners and sheriff WANT our local businesses to be able to stay open and have local citizens patronize these businesses? Do the commissioners and sheriff WANT schools to be able to open safely for students, families, teachers and support staff?

Thank you to Dr. Carol Calderwood, Public Health Nurse Karyn Johnston, former PHN LuAnn Burgmueller and all the Public Health staff for their dedicated service, commitment and leadership during such challenging times. Those who have resigned will be sorely missed, and difficult to replace.

Please: Mask Up Montana! Keep your distance, wash your hands, and get our kids back to schools that are safe due to the actions of responsible citizens taking effective measures now.

Sincerely,

Amy Monteith, Hamilton, MT