



## THE BRANDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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*"Setting the Pace  
for a Greater  
Brandon  
Since 1883"*

December 2, 2020

Dear Premier Pallister and Dr. Roussin,

On behalf of the Brandon Chamber network, we first want to thank you for your relentless efforts in the fight against COVID-19 and your dedication to minimize its damaging impacts to our healthcare system and economy.

This has been an incredibly challenging year for our members. Small business is truly the "backbone" to our economy in Western Manitoba, and to witness the deterioration of that spirit has been nothing short of heartbreaking. We will be feeling the intangible effects of this pandemic for years to come.

Our position as a Chamber network has never wavered from our support of the decisions of public health. However, we do believe there is a safe and controlled way to let our businesses reopen immediately in a limited capacity. As you look to reopen the economy in different regions across Manitoba, we would like you to take the following recommendations into consideration.

- 1. Avoid blanket approaches:** In the Prairie Mountain Health region, and specifically Brandon, we feel we deserve fair consideration of moving back to "code orange" if our case load continues in a favorable manor. Most Manitobans are following the rules. We should not be held accountable in this region for the actions of a few outside of it.
- 2. Provide as much detail as possible:** One of the biggest concerns we have heard from our business community is that they have no target in terms of active cases or local hospitalization rates to follow and identify a path to reopening. If you could please provide some transparency and detail into how your modelling affects your decision making, it could help a lot of business owners. For example: PMH to move back to level orange at "X" active cases and/or "Y" hospitalizations/ICU.
- 3. Make evidence-based decisions:** Government should not impose restrictions on low-risk business activity if evidence suggests that community spread is driven by non-compliance with social-gathering guidelines.
- 4. Provide businesses both a short term & long-term plan:** There is no denying how difficult 2020 has been on our business community. However, what has become even more difficult, is planning out our next one to six months as business owners. We need an immediate, incremental, and sustainable reopening plan to help our decision-making processes. I stress the word sustainable, as we cannot afford to go into another situation where we are faced with a closure. It is simply too hard on businesses. Laying off staff, rehiring staff, adjusting business offerings and the list goes on.

**5. Ask for more feedback from the Brandon business community on a safe and controlled reopening:** Through our engagement with numerous local businesses, we have gathered much input across many industries on how they can safely reopen their doors at a 25% capacity. For example: mandatory disinfection between servicing clients, strict enforcement of capacity limits, only marketing products and in-store purchases to consumers in our region, and additional tracing/tracking of customers to visit businesses just to name a few. Safely managing capacity and traffic flow in our businesses is the top priority of our businesses in reopening.

On a completely personal note, I am a business owner myself. I have been in business for the past 11+ years in Brandon selling sanitation and cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, and all things necessary to ensure a business can operate safely during a pandemic. My customer base is synonymous with the Prairie Mountain Health region. I can tell you with 100% certainty the level of the commitment made by our small business community. They are purchasing the products and implementing the proper procedures to operate in a safe and controlled manner.

We pledge to partner with the Provincial Government in a safe re-opening process. We commit to communicating with our members (and non-members alike) on a re-opening strategy; linking them with information, resources and connecting them to training they will need to safely re-open their businesses.

We are at a point where we desperately need to give our business community hope and reward them for their hard work in managing the spread of the virus. Thank you in advance for considering the recommendations we have put forward on how to reopen our region in a safe and controlled manner.

Sincerely,



**Spencer Day**  
President  
Brandon Chamber of Commerce

**Cc:**  
Mayor Rick Chrest  
The City of Brandon

Hon. Cliff Cullen  
MLA Spruce Woods

Chuck Davidson, CEO  
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Hon. Reg Helwer  
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