Good afternoon,

I hope that you’re doing well and have been able to manage the additional stressors brought on by the pandemic. At The ALS Association, MN/ND/SD Chapter, we’re continuing to do our best to support the ALS community’s most critical needs in a safe and timely manner.

At the onset of the pandemic, when the CDC came out with guidance highlighting the need to limit interactions with others; especially for high risk populations, we made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend our Family Respite Care Program in an effort to minimize exposure risk for all involved. After having an opportunity to pause to assess the immediate situation and consult with various experts within our network, we’ve decided to reopen the program effective **Friday, May 1, 2020**.

Please understand that our recommendation is that you limit visitors to your home in every way possible, including care providers, and that The ALS Association will not be held liable for exposure to COVID-19 resulting from the presence of a paid healthcare worker. The COVID-19 pandemic presents very real risks for those living with ALS and we recommend that you remain up-to-date on the relevant guidance from the CDC. You need to make your own determination as to whether you are comfortable using this service at this time. If so, we recommend that you discuss the COVID-19 pandemic with your provider so that you agree on your preferred precautions or modifications (such as universal masking). Additionally, for those interested in resuming respite care, know that there may be delays in scheduling as many homecare agencies are short-staffed during the pandemic.

That said, our goal is always to provide the help and support that you and your families need. After hearing your thoughtful feedback and discussing this with leading medical experts, this felt like the appropriate course of action. We trust that each of you will make what you believe to be the best decision for you and your families.

Let me know if there are additional things we can be doing to support you at this time. Take care and stay safe!

Sincerely,

Marianne Keuhn