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Minnesota Governor reports cases of bias against Asian-Americans amid COVID-19 crisis

Published March 26 | [Coronavirus](#) | [FOX 9](#)

ST. PAUL, Minn. (FOX 9) - Gov. Tim Walz said the state is "getting a lot of calls and experiencing cases of discrimination" against Asian and Pacific Islander Minnesotans as a result of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

In his daily briefing with Minnesota Department of Health officials, Walz took a minute to address the issue that he said was a "rare occurrence," but said "one time is too many."

Gov. Tim Walz, state officials give update on COVID-19 response (Thursday, March 26)

Thursday, March 26. Gov. Tim Walz and other state officials give an update on the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He asked Minnesotans to be "thoughtful and attentive" to those populations after many reported a higher rate of discrimination and hate speech against them because of COVID-19's genesis in China.

Walz said that members of his own staff even reported people turning away or walking away from them because of their Asian or Pacific Islander heritage. Walz said the cases were not an example of social distancing.

"That community is integral as any one of us to Minnesota," Walz said in his remarks. "Part of who we are, part of what we are. Across the state, we can't tolerate discrimination of our neighbors. We know it's unacceptable. This virus is not going to discriminate and we aren't going to either. I would ask all of you, if you become a victim of a hate crime because of fear around this, you need to contact someone."

State Sen. Fong Hawj said he was dismayed about the lack of funding to fight racial profiling, and appealed to Minnesotans to behave differently.

"I'd like to ask everybody to be extra, extra Minnesota nice," said Hawj, DFL-St. Paul. "I also ask my fellow legislators to help us calm anxiety in your own district as well."

President Donald Trump has repeatedly referred to the coronavirus as the "Chinese virus." The disease started in China but has since spread worldwide, and the U.S. is now one of the epicenters.

Walz said the state welcomes anyone who experiences discrimination to report it. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of COVID-19, contact the Minnesota Department of Human Rights by calling (651)539-1133 or 1-800-657-3704.

University of Minnesota

Earlier this week, the University of Minnesota also reported instances where University members were "experiencing bias and racism related to the COVID-19 outbreak," said President Joan Gabel in a release.

Anyone experiencing such actions should report them to the University's Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.



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