

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2020



Joint Statement Concerning the Rising Trajectory of COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) in Jefferson County

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges many of us have seen in our lifetimes. It is both a human crisis and a socio-economic crisis. For the past few months, we have endured unprecedented circumstances in our community. The lessons we learn from this time in our lives is going to forever be imprinted on how we face similar challenges in the future. The loss of life, the loss of business, and the loss of being with our loved ones has cast an extreme burden on everyone. We wish we could say there is an end in sight; unfortunately, now is not that time. Our data tells us that we are at a critically high level of virus transmission, number of cases and hospitalizations. Without a deliberate and swift change in our behavior and response to this virus, this will only get worse.

Right now, we need our community to be unified and work together to stop the spread of this virus and the concerns that it has brought to our neighbors. Our communities are small; everyone knows a person who has had the virus or been impacted by the outcomes of the virus. We are in a continually evolving situation, our scientific community is working diligently to provide a vaccine to help stop the spread of this virus; we do not know when this will be available however, we do know there are safety precautions we can all take to help mitigate the spread and end the shattering consequences it has brought with it.

We recognize this situation has caused hardships and losses for everyone; we are confident that by continuing to work together and showing resiliency, a little bit of flexibility and following the safety precautions that the CDC recommends we will come out as even stronger community on the other side of this pandemic. We are asking that you continue to wear your face covering when you are around others, wash or sanitize your hands often, practice physical distancing of 6 feet, stay home when you are ill and quarantine when necessary.

The stress on our healthcare systems, both capacity and workforce cannot be sustained. Hospitals and skilled nursing facilities are stressed to their breaking points. They continue to support the sick and dying; however, there is also a limit to availability and resources for all of them. Resources across the state are being utilized to the fullest extent possible,

including sending patients to the Alternate Care Facility at State Fair Park. We have issued a nation-wide call for health care personnel to work in our facilities to help combat this crisis. Our healthcare systems have diligently worked to continue providing for the medical care our community needs; the public is being asked to play an essential role in this process in helping to preserve what resources are left by following the safety guidelines suggested in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Our children have not gone unscathed during this pandemic; the loss of being with friends, being with family and most importantly the changes in the way their education is being provided have all taken a toll on our young population. Education plays a vital role in our children's lives; taking small steps to prevent the spread of this virus will allow our children to return to some normalcy. The holidays are going to be critical in the timeline of how schools provide ongoing sustained education. Our teachers and administrators stand ready to continue providing the quality education that each child deserves.

We would like to recognize the role our first responders have played during the pandemic; they are on the front lines every single day providing support to our community. They continuously put themselves in harm's way on a daily basis in order to keep us safe. Our frontline workers deserve our gratitude, they deserve our support, and they deserve to know that what they are doing on a daily basis is not being ignored by our community through unsafe practices.

The leadership in our county has taken this virus seriously since the first day; we have and continue to deal with the immediate and imperative call to protect the health of our community. We are concerned with the trajectory of positive cases in our communities and the impact that it has on the recovery of our residents and the businesses that serve us all.

The strong partnerships we have created between

businesses, health systems and our local governments to keep everyone safe have made a difference in the recovery process. We continue to comprehensively attack both the public health and economic hardships the virus has created while putting our community's health and wellbeing as our top priority.

We appreciate that hunting season is beginning and that we are entering the holidays; times we traditionally celebrate together and enjoy. This year is not a normal year and we are asking all of you to consider making small changes in the next coming weeks. Instead of going to places that have large groups of people; we ask you to stay home with your close loved ones. We encourage you to get outdoors and participate in the activities that we all love; but do it safely.

Our mission and responsibility is providing for the needs in our communities. Together we will make a difference; as leaders we will continue to show the resilience of all of our communities working together for one outcome; ending the crisis in our county. The safety and well-being of all of our citizens remains our mission. We stand ready and committed to serving you as leaders of these amazing communities; please stand with us to help end this crisis we now face.

We ask you to consistently wear your face masks, practice physical distancing from all who do not live with you and wash your hands often. We are asking you to stay home as much as possible; protect each other as if your life depends on it. Only then will we end this upward trajectory and the burden it has caused on our entire community.

Signed,

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