

Mistretta, Susan

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Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2020 2:16 PM
To: City Council - All
Subject: Request for Consideration

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Mayor and City Council of Dover,

Please consider my reasoning below as a request to institute a shelter-in-place for the state of New Hampshire for a period of time, reserve emergency funds for hospitals, and increase testing so that we may strive to lessen the impact of this pandemic.

Although it has been reported that 80% of people who are infected get “mild” symptoms, infection is not at all like a seasonal cold. Infections of COVID-19 that are considered mild means only that the patient did not develop pneumonia and have to go to intensive care. Going through even just the flu at home, with no quick access to medical assistance can cause complications for almost anyone. And now, many new reports are showing that the percentages of severe complications and fatalities from COVID-19 for people under the age of 50 are having to be revised significantly. This infection has proven to indeed be fatal to people of all ages.

For me, I had chronic bronchitis as a child. Every year I’d have a one to two week period of lying in bed struggling to breathe, but also knowing that I could eventually get better with the proper treatment. Even though I’ve grown out of it mostly, every time I get a head cold, my entire strategy is to do everything I can to keep an infection from developing in my lungs. I’m still relatively young and in quite good health. And this virus has a very real potential to kill me.

When I get infected, I will most likely need medical assistance. Even with my usual home treatments of Mucinex and a home nebulizer, I have no idea where the tipping point will be, and this virus can easily go too far for even emergency treatment to help. And this is not even taking into account that there may not be a ventilator available for me by that time. I can only pray that we will not get to the point where a doctor has to decide whether I am more “deserving” of a ventilator than someone else. Someone’s mother, or grandfather, or sister.

But when I look at the numbers going up, the known lack of testing, and the number of people and places that could infect me by just leaving my apartment, I don’t see how this isn’t the inevitable outcome.

While so many people are voluntarily staying home and social distancing, there are so many more who have to go out to work so they don’t lose their jobs. One “non-essential” business right here in Dover has told their workers that, if they choose to self-isolate, then the chances of them coming back there to work are slim. They console their workers by telling them to not come in if they are sick, but you know as well as I that any worker who begins showing symptoms has already infected everyone who they come into contact with for days beforehand.

Many state and local municipalities are going on lock-down, but the article [Why outbreaks like coronavirus spread exponentially, and how to “flatten the curve”](#) published on 3/14/20 in the Washington Post states how that is only slightly effective. As this situation drags on and on, more people are going to need to go back out and the vigilance of maintaining contact cleanliness is going to get less. We desperately need a “pause” in this pandemic. We need a chance for our amazing professionals to work on treatments and get more tests before all the hospitals are overrun. We need more data and a centralized plan to get ahead of this virus and to bolster our hospitals. Right now, we have no idea how many people are being unintentionally infected. And every day that we do not attempt to control this spread just adds that many more people who will need medical assistance.

If we enforce a shelter-in-place now, force nonessential companies to close their doors for a time and minimize the places and people who can come in contact with the virus, this could end up being a shorter disruption to the workforce than months of slow business forcing layoffs. Not to mention ongoing employee sicknesses that keep them out of work and pile up medical debt. If a shelter-in-place were called, many more people would voluntarily self-isolate in their homes. The people who are being forced to work right now are facing a decision of either losing their jobs or potentially being the ones to infect their families. Give us time for the people who are infected now to get treatment, without unknowingly infecting more.

For this is all of our lives at stake. Many people who may look and even feel perfectly healthy can have an underlying condition that we don't even know about. Even if that's not the case, we are looking at anyone with diabetes, high blood pressure, any injuries to the lungs (no matter how old), autoimmune diseases, or even someone just getting over a previous sickness could end up needing emergency care.

Now that many people are voluntarily working from home and are reading and sharing the news about this situation, we are sharing our stories on social media and passing news to each other as we read it. Now is the time to take the lead in our area. If we can enact a statewide shelter-in-place, we will be joining our neighbors across the country in solidarity of creating a more effective wall against this pandemic. As such, the longer it takes all states to act, the longer the areas already in quarantine will have to stay that way.

Tell the public that the health and well-being of everyone is being considered. And that action is being taken to save our lives.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mellicent Friddell

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