
MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR JENSEN AND BOROUGH ASSEMBLY
FROM: KARL HAGERMAN, EOC INCIDENT COMMANDER
SUBJECT: EOC RECOMMENDATIONS: LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH MANDATES AND ALERTS
DATE: 6/3/2021
CC: STEVE GIESBRECHT, BOROUGH MANAGER
DEBRA THOMPSON, BOROUGH CLERK
PHIL HOFSTETTER, PMC ADMINISTRATOR

In keeping with the previously approved plan to stand down the Emergency Operations Center, I am pleased to offer the following recommendations to the Assembly.

Mandate #3 – In-person Participation by the Public at Assembly meetings. This mandate has served its purpose to reduce the risk associated with gathering a crowd of diverse individuals in an enclosed space. Currently, the EOC is confident that the local risk is low enough to support public participation in the Assembly Chambers again. **The EOC recommends repeal of this mandate.**

Mandate #5 – Borough Harbor Facilities – Vessel Docking and Disembarkment. This mandate was recently revised and extended to the end of September 2021. However, the EOC has seen that a large majority of cruise businesses, that are targeted by this mandate, have taken it upon themselves to develop extensive protective plans for their crew and passengers and have placed a heavy, if not complete, emphasis on full vaccination requirements before boarding the vessels. As a result of the industry trend and the vaccination rate of Petersburg residents, the EOC sees no reason to extend this mandate past the expiration of the local Disaster Emergency Declaration, which is set to expire on June 30th. Passengers and crew of tour and cruise vessels should still follow CDC guidelines for mitigating COVID-19 onboard, and in the communities they visit, but the EOC sees no need to monitor this activity any longer due to the lowered risk now associated with the industry. **The EOC recommends allowing the expiration of this mandate to coincide with the expiration of the disaster declaration, on June 30th.**

Mandate #6 – Submission of Travel Plans. This mandate served to protect the community from critical infrastructure travelers who may bring the virus with them while performing their work. At this time, it is common for businesses to have travel mitigation plans on file with the State of Alaska and that frequent travelers are vaccinated, thereby protecting Petersburg from transmission of the virus. **The EOC recommends repeal of this mandate.**

Health Directive #7 – Non-congregate Sheltering. This mandate was excellent insurance for the community if we had a positive case within our population that was either homeless or a first responder or health care worker. While the program saw little use, the costs of reserving rooms was covered by FEMA throughout the existence of the mandate. At this time, the current expiration date for the directive was set at May 31, 2021 so there is no official action by the Assembly needed to repeal it. **The program is now expired and no action is required by the Assembly.**

Health Alert #4 – Intrastate Travel. This protective action was downgraded from a mandate to a health alert this spring. At the present time the State of Alaska Health Advisory #2 is in place, which recommends testing and mitigations for intrastate travelers in Alaska. Traveler testing will still be

available at the airport in Petersburg, or at the Petersburg Medical Center, for as long as the State contracts with the Borough and PMC staffing levels support the service. **The EOC recommends repeal of this Health Alert.**

Repeal of Mandate #10 – Interstate and International Travel. Similar to the intrastate travel guidance by the State of Alaska, interstate and international travel is covered by State Health Advisory #3 to test and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The EOC feels that the State recommendations are adequate to guide travelers insofar as prudent travel mitigations for protection of Petersburg’s population. As mentioned above, COVID-19 testing will continue to be available to travelers for as long as the State contracts with the Borough and PMC staffing levels support the service. **The EOC recommends the repeal of this mandate.**

The bulk of these recommendations are made as we see the highly positive impacts that have been brought about by a vaccinated population. Vaccines have given us our lives back and the Medical Center will continue to emphasize the importance of vaccinations to our ongoing health and the health of our economy. Vaccination reduces the chances of being infected by the virus and if a vaccinated person is infected, their symptoms and severity of the infection are markedly reduced in comparison to an unvaccinated person. The EOC fully supports the efforts by the PMC and State of Alaska to increase vaccinations throughout Petersburg and Alaska in general. The vaccine’s success has allowed for a huge step back to “normal” and we encourage the Assembly to support these recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration.