

Debra Thompson

From: Kathy Bracken <seanana49@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 31, 2021 10:41 PM
To: Emergency Operations Center; Assembly; Stephen Giesbrecht
Subject: Special Assembly Meeting regarding emergency declarations

Members of the Assembly, City Manager, Emergency Operations Center Personnel:

As you debate ending mandates and the Emergency Declaration, there are some things I would like you to consider.

The pandemic is not behind us.

I understand that those of you who have been working with the public since mid-March, 2020, are “done” with it. You have been battered mercilessly for doing your job and trying to keep people safe. But, the pandemic is not done with us.

I have been vaccinated and feel comfortable around others who have also been vaccinated. I’m a bit less comfortable around unvaccinated people, but feel that I can keep myself healthy and safe.

I get the attitude “my body, my choice”, and that’s fine for the 12-and-over population. My concern is for the children under 12 who do not yet have that choice. Children do get covid, and a small percentage become very ill.

The possibility of exposure for them still exists since 45% of the population (in Petersburg) remains unvaccinated.

Just 100 miles to the south of us, as of Friday, May 28th, Ketchikan’s community risk level is high. They had six new cases that day, 28 new cases over the prior seven days, 82 new cases over the prior two weeks.

Metlakatla had three new positive cases, for a total of nine active, two of which are hospitalized, and a recent death. It is true that our positive test results are very low—3 as of Saturday. However, I feel that you would be kidding yourselves if you believe that everyone who has symptoms is coming forward for testing. Just as in the outbreak last winter, we can be fairly certain that there were folks who were exhibiting symptoms and not going in for testing.

The two articles at the end of my letter are important to this topic, and I hope you will read them. Many in our unvaccinated population are not wearing masks, or otherwise protecting themselves. When adjusted for unvaccinated people, the national death rate is “roughly the same as it was two months ago and is barely inching down” and hospitalizations are as high as they were three months ago.

In Ketchikan, for example, all but a very few of the cases were unvaccinated. We saw the same in the outbreak in Petersburg last winter, as well. And, there will be more and more travelers coming into Petersburg, many unvaccinated, who could potentially spread the virus. If safe behaviors (masking, testing, etc.) are still “recommended”, at least there is an awareness that some people would like to be careful. Let’s be optimistic, but let’s also be cautious.

I’m also concerned that once the mandates are gone, it will be very hard to get them back if things get bad and we have another outbreak. They never have been enforced, but it seems they could still be on the books. The timeline for stepping down the Covid Emergency has been well-thought-out, and I sincerely hope it is successful, and not premature. I think some honest questions are how often will it be evaluated, and how quickly and easily can we reinstate an emergency declaration if necessary? Can the plan be placed in an inactive status rather than totally disbanded, at least until children under 12 can be vaccinated?

Informative articles:

https://www.adn.com/nation-world/2021/05/29/the-unseen-covid-19-risk-for-unvaccinated-people/?fbclid=IwAR0juU0_6RjfK8132M53Ch-j2iW-wfMVHW_sK9frxqc-F9sExjIL2VFO8zo

<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2021/05/22/just-heartbreaking-even-with-ample-vaccine-alaskas-doctors-are-seeing-covid-19-patients-die/?fbclid=IwAR1b5nIPVq5N26jTwpJWA91nUe6prPNyR9yqXEePuREtBdosrklDmIWQdo>

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns, and thank you for keeping our city safe and healthy.

Respectfully,
Kathy Bracken