



Carl J. Florea
Office of the Mayor
City of Leavenworth

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Community Members,

It does definitely feel like summer, doesn't it? And it is good to see things begin to move toward opening and the modified "normal". And the mask usage is definitely WAY up since the Governor issued his mandate. That is gratifying to see, as I am convinced, that is the best way to keep us going forward. Thanks to all of you! Hopefully we will begin to see a corresponding fall in the number of new cases down the line, as lately they have been going up. But we know that the current reality reflects what was going on a week or two ago, not what is happening now. So just as it takes a while for new cases to show up after an exposure, it will take a while for the new increased rate of mask wearing to also show results. Keep your fingers crossed that we will see the numbers start to fall!

I do want to comment on something that I have been hearing a bit more lately that concerns me. It has been widely reported that the latest surge in the virus has been among a much younger group of people. And some are saying that, since these people are not as vulnerable and tend to get less sick, that it is really OK and not a big deal. This concerns me because it ignores the reality that: 1) COVID-19 can be deadly to some smaller segment even in this "less risky" population, and 2) this keeps the virus active and circulating freely in our society and will eventually impact the vulnerable populations among us if we don't do a better job of knocking it down. Just look at what is happening to hospitalizations in these areas with more cases. Even though the average age is falling, the hospitalizations are rising and, in some places, threatening to overwhelm the system. Even locally we are seeing rising totals of hospitalizations. Not overwhelming us yet, but of great concern if we don't get this turned back around.

There is a tendency to want to divide our population as a whole, into those who are vulnerable and those who are less so, and then to deal with them differently. That leads us to a false sense of security. Again, we are all in this together! What any of us does impacts those around us, for good or ill. And just because we have not seen the same death rate occurring right now with the surges happening in so many states, it does not mean we won't eventually be seeing that spike again. That lags behind just as most things with this virus. Nothing is instantaneous, not the good we begin doing, nor the bad results of past indiscretions. The key is to do the right thing because it is the right thing, and not because we will see instant results. Conversely, don't be casual and take risks, even when we get the number of new cases to drop. That will not mean it is "safe" now to go back to not wearing masks. This wearing of masks and social distancing has to become our new normal – period! At least until we have a safe and readily available vaccine.

So, again, thank you to everyone who is following the requirement to wear a mask! It might not seem to you that it is a big deal. But when it is compounded by all the others who are doing it – it truly is a big deal! Stay safe and enjoy your weekend!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor
City of Leavenworth
700 Highway 2
Leavenworth, WA 98826
(509) 548-5275
cflorea@cityofleavenworth.com