From:	Cindy Farr
To:	birdondewire@gmail.com; Ellen Leahy
Cc:	Sandra Vasecka; Julie Merritt; Grp. City Council and City Web Site; bcc
Subject:	Re:
Date:	Tuesday, June 30, 2020 5:26:54 PM

Hi Deanna,
Thank you for your kind words and for reaching out with your experience and feedback. We are meeting with our elected officials and the board of health to discuss this and will share your experience and feedback with them as well.
Take good care,
Cindy

Cindy Farr, BSN
Incident Commander - COVID-19 Response
Health Promotion Division Director
Missoula City-County Health Department
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Missoula, MT 59801
(406)258-3686

Missoula Public Health
City-County Health Department

From: Deana DeWire <birdondewire@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 4:16 PM
To: Ellen Leahy <eleahy@missoulacounty.us>; Cindy Farr <cfarr@missoulacounty.us>
Cc: vaseckas@ci.missoula.mt.us <vaseckas@ci.missoula.mt.us>; jmerritt@ci.missoula.mt.us <jmerritt@ci.missoula.mt.us>; council@ci.missoula.mt.us <council@ci.missoula.mt.us>; bcc <bcc@missoulacounty.us>
Subject:

Hi Ellen and Cindy,

I wanted to reach out to you all and share an experience that I had while getting gas at Clearwater Junction last week - I'm including city council and county commissioners because I'm not sure who has the authority to respond to these types of situations with some action.

I was traveling to Seeley Lake for work last Monday and had to stop for gas at the cow, which was very busy. After pumping my gas, I pulled into a parking spot to wait for my crew to catch up. I noticed that more than 50% of the vehicles were from out of state; and not just neighboring states, but all over the country - NY, CA, MN, UT, OR, WA, NC... literally, every corner of the country was at that gas station.

I am NOT exaggerating when I say that not one - not a single person with out of state plates - wore a mask when they entered the gas station. Additionally, they were mostly entering the store as a full traveling cohort, not just one person from the group. I would say that about 1/2

of the folks with MT plates had masks on and were not entering the store in large groups.

This was incredibly alarming. I know that you are working very hard to advocate for face coverings in hopes that they will become normalized and ubiquitous, but it simply isn't happening at the pace and scale that it needs to and the message is not getting to our visitors. As our understanding of this virus grows, we see more and more how effective universal masking can be! This is now evident from laboratory work (such as this study), modeling (discussed here) and with real-world evidence from areas that enacted universal masking policies (discussed here and here).

Today, we have 56 new cases in the state - there is simply no excuse why we are not implementing such policies! I know that this may seem unpopular and I certainly don't envy your position as the public face of our community response! I have nothing but empathy for you being at the front of the front-line! But, it is my opinion that we are sacrificing nothing by wearing a mask! It is, at worst, a minor inconvenience to wear a mask in a building or where social distancing isn't possible! The actual sacrifice is losing child care or in-class instruction this fall, which is a moderate sacrifice. A worse sacrifice, for me, has been hearing my grandmother's loneliness and fear when she's been hospitalized in isolation, without visitors and in an environment where her caretakers are so covered up that she can't tell if they're human, let alone look them in the eyes to connect on a human level while receiving her diagnosis. And, of course, there are those making the greatest sacrifice of all in losing their loved ones, alone, and not having a space to mourn for them properly. THOSE are the true sacrifices. Comparatively, masks are nothing!

Montanans pride ourselves on taking care of our neighbors! We do it everyday because it's as much a part of our being and our culture as the landscape - Wearing a mask is an extension of that care! And it is the lowest common denominator to keeping our economy open! So, please! Consider enacting a policy of universal masking!

Thank you so much for all your hard work, diligence and transparency! I continue to be in awe of the work that you are doing around this and our community is grateful!
Best wishes to you all at the health department!
dd

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