

Debra Thompson

From: Kathy Bracken <seanana49@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 9:49 AM
To: Assembly; Emergency Operations Center; Stephen Giesbrecht; Karl Hagerman
Subject: Mask Mandate in Petersburg

July 27, 2020

Members of the Borough Assembly, Manager Giesbrecht, Karl Hagerman, Incident Command Team,

I want to thank you for leading us during this unprecedented pandemic. You have done an exemplary job of organizing and protecting our community over the past four, plus, months, and you have my heartfelt gratitude.

I have been wearing a mask in public for over four months to protect others, just in case I am an asymptomatic carrier of the Coronavirus. I am disappointed in others who ignore the science of masking and do not care to protect others. I have lived with this reality and tried to avoid those people. But, recently, what I've heard about and seen of local risky behaviors concerns me and has prompted me to write and request that you consider a mask mandate.

It was impressive that Petersburg's people rallied and hunkered down and really acted like a community that truly cares for one another when the country began feeling the effects of the pandemic in March. How fortunate that there were only three random cases in the first two months, another random case earlier this month, and then a few visitors that followed the rules or skipped town!

At first glance, one would even be tempted to think that if the virus has landed in Petersburg, it's so minimal that it's not rearing its ugly head, especially because many people have gone back to attending in-home parties, church services—including singing—and going about daily and nightly routines and entertainment.

Meanwhile, over 4,400,000 fellow citizens in our Nation have contracted a potentially deadly virus and are spreading it exponentially, while over 150,000 have died. These numbers are astounding and heartbreaking, especially because each one represents a human life. Meanwhile, some want us to believe this is a conspiracy and the numbers lie. The reality is, the US never got over the first wave, the first wave just relocated.

While this pandemic has (for real, even though some don't believe it) been infecting thousands of people elsewhere, Petersburg has been very fortunate with our few cases and not overwhelming our hospital and our medical community. By May, because the virus wasn't an immediate threat, lots of people in our community were "done" with restrictions and became lax and risky.

Then the governor reopened the state. It was almost as if nothing, especially a major pandemic, was happening. Except that people from other places knew, and most weren't traveling, and our town was pretty quiet.

I listed the progression of the number of cases from the end of May through the present at the end of my letter. The numbers are from the State of Alaska Division of Health and Social Services. You can see the points at which our State had some significant increases in cases, as the virus began its insidious spread into our state.

On May 31, we had 460 resident cases, 21 Non-resident cases, and 10 deaths.

By the end of June, we had doubled our cases at 978 Resident cases and had an increased to 198 Non-Resident cases, 67 hospitalizations and 14 deaths.

Now, entering the last week of July, the cases have almost tripled to **2524 Residents, 578 Nonresidents, with 115 hospitalizations and 20 deaths**. These numbers don't sound high compared to the rest of the country, but the **rate per capita puts Alaska as #1**, not a good thing!

The most recent count day (results of July 25, posted July 26) saw our first triple-digit case increase of 186—up from 88 the previous day—residents, and 45 non residents.

It's easy to say, "These are cases in Anchorage." But I would like to know how many people have been to or through Anchorage, or other parts of Alaska in the past two weeks. I would also like to know how many asymptomatic people our recent travelers have been in contact with that have not yet been diagnosed as positive. People travel from the hot spots in Alaska. It's a fact of life here. It's now a risk. How can the people who have traveled **INTRASTATE** protect the residents of Petersburg? Mainly by keeping a safe distance and by wearing a mask.

On the subject of travelers, I happened to be driving past the airport on Friday afternoon just as the jet had unloaded passengers. Parking had overflowed down the sides of Haugen Drive. It was a joyous reunion of many people, hugs all over the place. I'm guessing that many of the passengers were our fishers who had just returned from The Bay. I'm so happy that family members were reunited! It's a relief to have them home, and a special time! I wonder how many of these people self-quarantined because they'd traveled and lived in potentially infectious situations? I don't know how many times this scene has been repeated, but my concern is that there is a good chance that these travelers are asymptomatic with Covid 19, and that they will not be self-quarantining. So, my question is, how should these folks protect us and stop the spread, just in case? Mainly by keeping a safe distance and by wearing a mask.

It's also probable that many went out and celebrated the end of the season, after a good night's sleep. Maybe out to dinner, maybe out to have a few drinks. I want restaurants and other entertainment establishments to stay in business. I want the economy to be healthy. I also want all of our residents to be healthy. Residents can be kept healthy, and we can keep our economy healthy if everyone watches their distance and wears a mask.

Another situation that came to my attention on Friday, and which I luckily avoided, was the long line out the door and down the sidewalk at the post office. Of course, we have packages to pick up or to mail. All of us do. And the two wonderful women who are the glue that holds our post office together work their rear ends off!! The line is no one's fault. But the line could be safer, and we could potentially keep our postal staff healthier if we all wore masks.

Many people don't have the luxury to stay home and sit this pandemic out. There are many, many people who are immunocompromised or otherwise at risk. I was astounded at the long list of diseases that increase vulnerability to Covid 19. And don't forget the elderly. We can be a caring community and protect each other.

For those who would say we need to build our immunity, here are some thoughts, I am 71 years young. My behaviors are safe. Nevertheless, as we age our immune systems are not as efficient. I calculate every moment I will be in a public setting, and evaluate whether it is safe or not, and how long my activity will take. My partner and I are strengthening our immune systems continually—we exercise daily, get fresh air, eat healthy home-cooked meals, including lots of antioxidants and super-healthy foods. We take supplements, including Vitamin D and Zinc. We have traveled globally, so have been exposed to a multitude of microbes, and have been exposed to many wonderful ideas! But if someone happens to be an asymptomatic carrier and doesn't wear a mask, and I have one moment of vulnerability, I've likely been exposed me to Covid 19. I could be protected if the carrier kept a distance or wore a mask.

*Alaska's Covid 19 cases have spiked dramatically in the past three weeks.

*Many people in Petersburg travel around the state, and have been in or through areas where there have been many positive cases.

*We have many vulnerable people in our Petersburg population.

*Wearing a mask has been shown to prevent the spread of Covid 19.

*If we keep our people healthy, our economy will be healthy.

Wearing a mask shows that you're paying attention to what's going on in the world around you, that you respect science, and that you are a critical thinker. It also shows that you care about your community—the people, the schools, and the economy. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared to the devastation caused by Covid 19. The medical **experts** have presented you with scientific evidence, from **real scientists**, proving masks are not harmful and will help greatly to prevent the spread of Covid 19. If you feel you need more information, I will be happy to procure it for you.

Finally, Petersburg has been very fortunate!! With all the information we have about how wearing masks prevents spread, and so many people in the country testing positive, why wouldn't you, as elected officials, **do everything**

possible to keep your citizens safe?! I hope you will consider this as soon as possible, and hope were not already too far behind in stopping the spread.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Kathy Bracken, Citizen, Petersburg, Alaska

Coronavirus Case Information from Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

At the end of May, 460 Resident, 21 NonResident, 10 deaths

Date	Resident Cases	NonRes	Hospitalizations	Death
6/1	7			
6/2	20		1	
6/3	18		1	
6/4	8		18	
6/5	11		2	
6/6	12		2	
6/7	8		1	
6/8	19			
6/9	11			1
6/10	20		2	
6/11	17		7	
6/12	15		7	1
6/13	29		5	
6/14	9		3	
6/15	3		1	
6/16	12		1	
6/17	20		5	
6/18	12		7	
6/19	14		12	
6/20	21		2	
6/21	12		2	
6/22	6		4	
6/23	16		19	
6/24	14		7	
6/25	25		19	
6/26	20		10	2 (2)out/st
6/27	19		8	
6/28	29		4	
6/29	21		4	
6/30	36		12	
End of June Residents 978, Nonresidents 198, 14 Deaths				
7/1	38		4	
7/2	39		11	
7/3	46		14	1
7/4	48		7	1
7/5	27		5	
7/6	28		2	2
7/7	19		4	4
7/8	40		9	1

7/9	46	3	1		
7/10	51	4			
7/11	63	14	5		
7/12	93	23	1		
7/13	60	11	1		
7/14	40	14	5		
7/15	53	4	4		
7/16	65	10			
7/17	39	10	2		
7/18	62	16	1		1
July 12 - 18 rose by 25%					
7/19	82	37			
7/20	75	66	1		
7/21	92	17	5		
7/22	92	2	4		1
7/23	65	3	2		
7/24.	59	6			
7/25	88	27	4		1
7/26	186	45			
	2524	578	115	20	

When the Power of Love overcomes the Love of Power, there will be PEACE.