



## Petersburg Medical Center

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Dear Mayor and Assembly Members,

I am writing as representative of the Petersburg Medical Center (PMC) Incident Command Team for the COVID-19 crisis. We are heading into the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The initial strategy focused on quarantine to flatten “the curve” to stop the spread, allow a build-up of PPE, supplies, capacity to treat, testing, and find appropriate treatments. In April Petersburg opened the economy under Governor Dunleavy’s mandates. It was not clear then, if the virus had entered into a lull or if cases would increase as a wave or exponentially. The Borough Incident Command and PMC invited leaders in State department of Social Services on May 20<sup>th</sup> in an Assembly work-session for the community to better understand the virus and decide how to prepare for an outbreak locally in the event it occurred. Testing capacity slowly increased and we are intent to find, isolate, test and care for each case. The Borough Incident Command and PMC have worked tirelessly to comply with state mandates and stand up asymptomatic testing at the airport, canneries and local businesses and find the virus. It is clear now, the virus is a ‘forest fire’ and the scale of positive cases continues to escalate dramatically. Each day is a new “record” number of cases in the state. The public health and state labs are backlogged and delayed. The follow up on contact tracings is increasingly difficult due to the high number of cases in the state.

In Petersburg, the past 5 days have seen three positive COVID cases; one from the asymptomatic airport testing, one with the cannery workforce and one from the PMC Respiratory Clinic symptomatic testing. Currently, there are 189 outstanding tests due to the increase in testing and backlog with commercial labs. Given the backlog and the three positive cases in 5 days, I am advocating for quick action in the following manner:


- Support the Borough EOC to develop a series of actions to maintain safety while we are open.
  - Borough EOC create a local COVID-19 Infectious Risk Status (Green, Yellow, Red), similar to the Operational Status used by Petersburg Medical Center. Base status on community cases and community compliance with mitigation recommendations.
    - Activate a mandate requiring masking and social distancing whenever possible, in all indoor public environments and outdoor venues where proper social distancing is not possible. Consider a mandate tied to the Borough Operational Status.
    - Strongly reaffirm the need for social distancing in Petersburg.
    - Curtail and/or cancel community gatherings or group events.
    - Increased public service announcements affirming the above, as well as encouraging early evaluation and possible testing for symptomatic individuals via the Covid hotline, 907-772-4788 area.
    - Increased vigilance for hygiene and sanitation to all high contact and public areas.
    - As possible, increased availability of public hygiene stations.
    - Increased personal situational awareness by keeping social bubbles manageable. A good way to judge if your social bubble is manageable, could you list all the people you have been in contact with for the past 10 days?

*Guiding Values: Integrity - Dignity - Professionalism - Team Work - Quality*

- Employer: monitor your employees for symptoms and refer them to the COVID Triage Hotline.

The economy is vital as is the safety of the community. The above actions are a way to maintain both safely. Objective use of information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the State of Alaska and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is critical to make decisions. There is much uncertainty in this virus and we need to allow a great deal of flexibility towards actions and decisions. The information will change. Polarized politization in matters related to the virus confuse and distract from the serious challenges we are facing. Your continued support is instrumental.

Thank you for taking this into consideration,



Phil Hofstetter, CEO/Incident Commander  
Petersburg Medical Center