

Aldersgate UMC News
Letter 4, March 16, 2020

Dear Friends,

First of all, (yes, I'm going to say it) take your three deep breaths.

By now, you are all aware of the "Shelter in Place" in the six Bay Area Counties for the next three weeks. While this news is shocking, perhaps a "shock" is precisely what we need to understand the depth of the crises in which we are in the midst of. Remember, the action is not because we are losing but it is what we are "doing" to combat this pandemic.

Here are the details of "Shelter in Place" from the San Jose Mercury.

For those who wish to understand in depth the medical strategy to combat this pandemic has provided a detailed explanation. Chris is the chief medical officer at "Forty Seven". This info is included below.

Keep on praying for those on the front lines keeping our supply lines, medical care, and basic services operational during this shelter in place phase.

Continue to check in with one another. Be safe, stay healthy and be kind!

Sincerely,

Roger

Update on projected activities at Aldersgate:

1. All Aldersgate activities including worship will be cancelled through April. The situation will be reassessed along the way.
2. The Spring Bazaar scheduled for May 2, 2020 will be cancelled.

Perspectives: The following is shared by a church member. She received it from a friend.

Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath -
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.

Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.

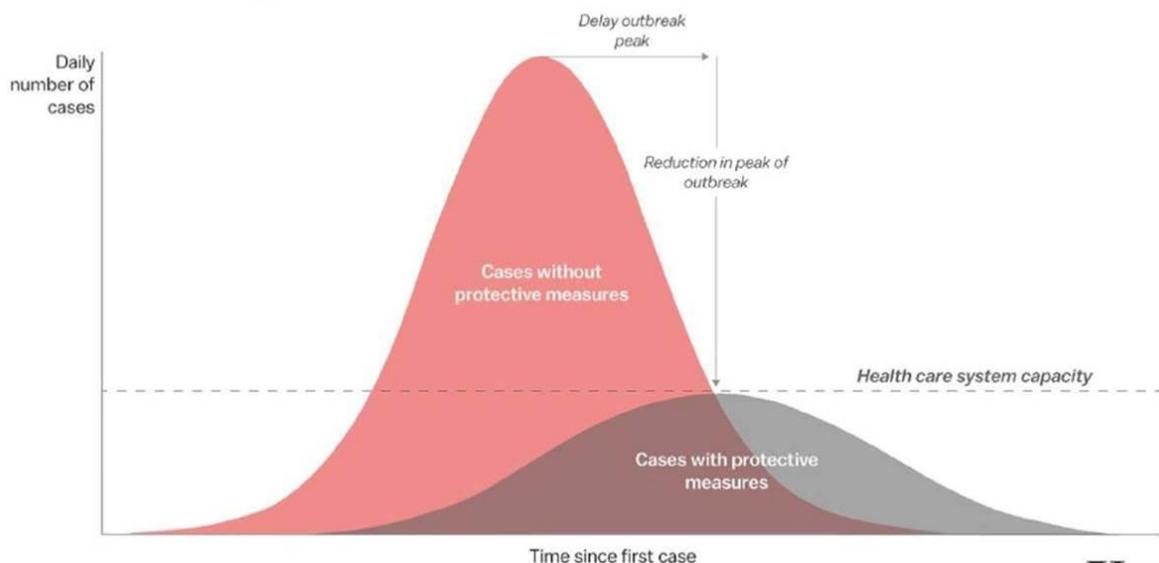
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love -
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.
~Lynn Ungar 3/11/20

Flattening the curve



Source: CDC

Vox

Information from Chris Takemoto:

Subject: A Message from Your Chief Medical Officer: Social Distancing and What Each of Us Can Do To Help Save Lives

In this time of unprecedented public health measures, there may be some confusion on what we can do both collectively and at a personal level to help stem the tide of the COVID-19 virus. I have summarized some information on how this pandemic might unfold and I wanted to provide clear guidance on what each of us can be doing to help mitigate the impact of this disease and, ultimately, to save lives. These thoughts and recommendations are my own and I have drawn heavily from several sources including an excellent monograph by Assaf Bitton, MD, a Harvard Primary Care Physician and head of the Brigham and Women's and Harvard School of Public Health's Ariadne Labs (For more information [click here](#)).

The next few days to a week or so may represent a key inflection point on how this pandemic will unfold. Without question, the country to this point has been slow to mobilize and the communication from our national leaders on this topic has been, with a few exceptions, contradictory, muddled, or just plain false. Nonetheless, in the past few days, we have seen a shift to a more directly addressing the magnitude of this public health crises. Critical measures are now being instituted such as widespread and rapid testing for the COVID-19 virus and implementation of precautions that are new to many of us, which are now being referred to as Social Distancing.

My previous communication dealt with some of the specifics of the COVID-19 virus, but here I wanted to specifically address this concept of Social Distancing. Specifically, what is meant by it and is it really important?

The Goal of Social Distancing: Mitigating the Pandemic by Flattening the Curve

Without the implementation of steps that can slow the spread of the virus through our community, the shape of the incidence of infection curve is tall peak that will easily overwhelm the available healthcare resources available. This includes both hospital and ICU beds, and a shortage of these resources will result in many more deaths in the high risk population. However, the goal of Social Distancing, which is basically keeping people apart, is to take us off the current trajectory, and to shift it to a flatter incidence of infection curve that can be more effectively managed by our existing healthcare resources. Lessening the peak demand will decrease the mortality rate and potentially reduce the overall number of cases (i.e., lower area under the infection curve for those of you who are like Balaji, and are inclined to think like a clinical pharmacologist). Thus, the steps we take now, will determine whether we can avoid a worse crisis later. But the time to implement these steps is short and the what we do in this week will be critical.

So What Exactly Is Social Distancing?

The CDC defines Social Distancing as “remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.” In epidemiological studies Social Distancing has been defined as school closure, increased isolation of symptomatic individuals in their household, workplace nonattendance, and reduction of contact in the wider community. But does it really work? For those of us who are scientifically inclined, the answer is yes, at least in formal epidemiological simulations of viral pandemics, but only if instituted rapidly at the start of an outbreak (See Kelson et al., BMC Public Health, 2009).

What Can I Do Personally and What Can My Family Do to Implement Social Distancing?

To quote Douglas Adams, “Don’t Panic”! But we should all think about how we can implement Social Distancing principles, effective immediately. Clearly this is the right thing to do, but what exactly does this mean? Well, thanks to Dr. Bitton and others, these are some things that you and your family can do to mitigate the impact of COVID-19:

Avoid playdates, parties, sleepovers, and group activities. You should even try to avoid visiting friends and family at each other’s homes. This can be hard, especially with small kids now at home because many schools have (thankfully!) closed down classes. Remember that the coronavirus is already in our community. Therefore, identifying people who are shedding infectious virus and who pose a risk for transmitting the disease, such as recent international travelers, is not so simple. Also, because coronavirus can take several days to manifest symptoms, even individuals looking quite well can potentially transmit the virus.

Take care of yourself and family, but maintain social distance. Avoid large gathering of individuals. When out in public, try to maintain at least six feet distance between you and others. Avoid the use of public facilities, since coronavirus can live on surfaces for up to nine days, especially on surfaces such as metal and plastic (Preprint of van Doremalen et al, 2020). Do not visit your elderly friends and relatives in their homes or in nursing or senior citizen communities. Greet others by a friendly hand wave or, like our Japanese colleagues, with a polite bow rather than a handshake or even an elbow bump.

Limit the frequency of going to stores, restaurants, and other errands to the extent possible for the time being. Wash your hands frequently, but leave masks and gloves to the medical professionals. Do your shopping at off hours when crowds are likely to be less and only buy the supplies that you need. Try not to hoard. We want to leave enough to go around for everyone. While following these guidelines, also consider supporting local small businesses within your communities, and think about those who may be suffering disproportionately during these trying times.

If you are sick, isolate yourself and stay at home. Call your doctor’s office or the County Health Department for more information. DO NOT walk into your doctor’s office or an ambulatory care clinic unannounced without

phoning them in advance! The San Mateo County Health Department Coronavirus information page is here and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department website is here. If you live in other counties, check your local Health Department websites for more information.

If you do have to be present at the workplace, avoid group meetings where possible and consider teleconferences, even for onsite employees. Also, please try to respect the six feet spacing rule.

The duration of Social Distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet clear. It may be weeks or even a month or more; however, the speed at which these guidelines are adopted is one of the most important factors in determining their overall effectiveness.

A critical takeaway is for all of us to realize that these measures do have an impact on the spread of this disease and that there are sound epidemiological principles underlying these recommendations. A fascinating article on how two different US communities (Philadelphia and St. Louis) approached Social Distancing during the 1918 Spanish Influenza epidemic with widely divergent outcomes is available here.

Finally, I recognize that these are trying times and implementing all of the above is not be easy. It represents a major change to our daily lives, to our working style, and it creates hardships for all of us. But correctly done it will save lives, especially those of our elderly loved ones. Adherence to these guidelines will allow us to be true to our mission at Forty Seven, which is to rally together and Help Patients Defeat Their [Disease and Their] Cancer!

If you have questions or concerns about your work, please discuss this with your manager at Forty Seven. Please feel free to address more general health related questions to me or to any of our Forty Seven physicians.

And once again, please stay healthy and safe and help keep our communities safe, too!!!