

Hello special joint coronavirus committee-

Please see the email that was sent to my state representatives this morning. I hope you will take these recommendations and add them to all other approaches you are considering.

Mark Gibbs

Hello Senator Wagner and Representative Salinas-

I am writing to express my concerns for to you regarding our current situation with the COVID virus. My intent was to direct this to the governor with a cc to each of you but I find that the governors office doesn't have a direct email, nor does her chief of staff. I am an emergency room nurse and I have worked as an emergency room nurse for the past 8 years. My total time working in healthcare is closer to 20 years, this is the first time I have ever felt that we have an issue that will put my health and the health of my family at risk. As this issue continues to develop, as I contemplate it on a daily basis, and observe peoples response to the situation I am quite sure that we are far behind the ball for where we need to be.

Simply put the governor needs to pass immediate rules to stop hoarding of supplies, limiting shopping hours, direct people to only venture out shopping for essential supplies, close gyms and other public gathering places. Second to this the state needs to facilitate supply chains that will provide PPE equipment to first responders. The fact of the matter is this, the damage that these steps may inflict on the economy is temporary but if we don't get further out in front of this now the damage to our healthcare system will be unrelenting. Further, I am a small business supporter and if we don't limit the spread of this illness now we will permanently damage the ability of those businesses to recover due to longer lasting and repeated shut downs of many small businesses like coffee shops and restaurants.

An observation that I had yesterday, while admittedly getting out to pick up some supplies, was a family of 4 at target, mom, dad and two children. At least three of those individuals didn't need to be there. Oddly enough that was one of many families that I observed at Target yesterday. I also observed one elderly woman with an electric shopping cart attempting to get supplies. Based on the information that has been made available to the public, families may feel that their children are the least at risk due to COVID illness so it is okay to go out in public, what people are still not putting together is that with more people interacting, even briefly, we are putting more people such as the elderly at risk.

Here is another consideration that I am aware of. Currently in the United States there are at least two physicians who are hospitalized in Critical Care with COVID infections. One of those physicians is an emergency room physician with Evergreen Health in Kirkland Washington. Washington is only slightly ahead of us in terms of the date that the first case was discovered but the volume of infections continues to grow rapidly, this will soon happen in Oregon as well if we do not get further ahead of this with any possible measures that we have at our disposal. We don't publish the number of nurses, firefighters, paramedics or other healthcare workers who have been hospitalized by this virus but as we are providing frontline care, our risk of becoming ill is as great as any other members of the healthcare team. If our healthcare teams are saddled with illness we are unable to take care of others who may

need our help.

My final sobering reality came recently when I listed to The New York Times Daily on Tuesday March 17th where they spoke to a physician in Italy who outlined the challenges they are currently facing. He talked about the challenges of not being able to put some people on ventilators and picking who was going to live or die, sometimes without family being present in the persons final hours. This is likely to happen here as well. As a nurse, I have been in the room when someone is taking their last breath and I may very well be the only individual who will be present with someones loved one when they pass away during the course of this epidemic. This is always a sobering moment that allows me to reflect on the fragility of our life. I would ask that you request of the governor to take as many of these additional steps as necessary for us to get further out in front of this virus. This will be an exhausting time in healthcare where myself and many of my coworkers will be at risk for illness and injury or bringing an illness home to their family. We need to work to slow this down now.

Sincerely,

Mark Gibbs
Lake Oswego, OR