

Governor of Ohio Press Conference: 3/24/2020

Opening: played a video of several Ohio celebrities/personalities speaking about the need to “flatten the curve” and reviewing the techniques we all can do to help stop the spread of the virus. Can be found on website: www.coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Governor DeWine Remarks:

- Started with a personal story of a friend that texted him about still going to the cemetery to visit his wife’s grave – basically reinforcing that it is okay to still partake in some everyday activities while practicing the safety guidelines that are in force.
- Ohio has been watching the data and actions of other countries and states to help guide policy. Overarching Goal: do not overwhelm the healthcare system so that we can deal with cases of the coronavirus while still taking care of all of the other medical emergencies as they occur.
- On the medical front – putting a focus on increasing hospital capacity.
 - Working to increase capacity of hospital beds and available personal protection equipment (PPE). Optimizing efforts with hospitals across the state.
 - State medical team lead by Dr. Amy Acton now working with the state Emergency Operations Center – an existing agency to handle any type of emergency that occurs within the state – to increase response capabilities.
 - Modeling: state agencies are working together to gather data and form models based on collected data. Other hospitals like The Cleveland Clinic are forming their own models – all are sharing data and comparing notes to get the best data.
 - Innovate Ohio – also bringing in private sector personnel to help with modeling efforts.
 - Model shows that we still haven’t reached the peak of the curve, still on the upswing. Remaining focused on Prevention and Preparation.
 - PPE: getting out to the areas with highest needs; getting donations from private sector; still encouraging postponement of elective procedures in order to conserve for those most in need; private sector being mobilized for supply and manufacture more.
- On the economic front:
 - Stated he is very understanding of the economic sacrifices and hardships that this is causing to our families. Reminder of the goal – to protect lives.
 - Has been asked about the comments being made by President Trump regarding the timeline for getting back to a more normal state:
 - Feels that they are aligned about getting this over as soon as possible and getting people back to work; he shares the frustration over the situation.
 - Governor believes that protecting the health of citizens and also protecting the economy are not mutually exclusive. Saving lives is important step in saving the economy.

- If we allow the hospital systems to become overwhelmed, patients will not get the care they need, and our medical workers will be in more danger as well – would be a tragedy if we didn't do all we can to prevent this from happening.
- Personal safety is a bedrock component of an increasing economy – people need to be healthy and save in order to work.
- Governor sees the issues this is creating (driving down empty streets) but is resolute that this is something we have to do; he's as anxious as anyone to see us return to normal, but we're not at that point yet.

Dr. Acton Remarks:

- Opened by thanking the medical and communications teams that are working so hard to help people and provide the best information they can.
- Her role is to share the data we have:
 - Current confirmed cases: 564; said this is the “tip of the iceberg” because of lag time between tests and data collection
 - Cases in 49 counties (out of 88); age range is <1 to 95 years old.
 - Have had 8 confirmed deaths so far.
 - Currently have 145 cases hospitalized – 62 of those are in Intensive Care Units (ICU) – 25 of those cases have come from long term care facilities
 - Highest case rate is in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) - 167, then Franklin County (Columbus) - 75
 - Case counts are still increasing daily
 - Health care workers make up 16% of cases
 - 25.7% of cases require hospitalization
 - 11% of cases require ICU treatment
 - Ohio's Curve:
 - US curve is currently following pace of Italy; Ohio is on pace with the US curve
 - Ohio is seeing a 7-14 day lag following the New York curve (which is outpacing the Italy curve for cases/1MM people)
 - Hospital bed availability:
 - Currently at 60% of capacity for total beds
 - State has about 3600 ICU beds
 - Following model of Maryland – trying to treat the hospital as a large ICU
 - Looking at converting empty hotels and dorm rooms into hospital units
- Stopping the spread is critical – unchecked we would be seeing up to 6000 new cases per day

Lt. Governor Husted Remarks:

- They're daily focus with these conferences – share whatever data they have collected and then go out and collect more data
- Essential Business Guidelines:

- Go to website for Stay At Home order document and explanations of essential vs. non-essential.
- Following Homeland Security guidelines – stressed that we all must use our best judgment to determine how to proceed
- DO NOT call your local government or law enforcement offices for interpretation if your business qualifies – their job is to enforce the order, not to interpret it. Should not be spending resources answering these questions.
- DO have a sound, explainable rationale for your business if you are staying open as essential. Businesses do not need letters or certificates to validate their operation, but if they are questioned from employees or local authorities, they should be prepared to explain why they are open.
- If a business remains open as essential – must follow the safety standards that are in place to protect their workers. This is the most important step to protecting your business – without workers you can't operate.
- We must collectively work to slow the spread of the virus – it only spreads when we spread it. This is a situation where everyone can either be part of the solution or part of the problem.
- If you are laid off from a job and want to work – seek employment with essential businesses if you can (e.g. grocery stores, distribution facilities).
- Lending:
 - Banks and Credit Unions are open and doing business. Access them in ways that you can – drive up ATM, online resources, phone.
 - Mortgages: Federal Housing Finance Authority has issued a 60 day moratorium on any foreclosures and a 12 month forbearance to help those in need.
 - Commercial Lenders:
 - Most of those regulations are at the Federal level
 - If you are experiencing issues – call your lender and they will work with you; they have been given the authority to help business borrowers
- Unemployment Numbers:
 - Have been instructed by Dept. of Labor to not release figures on a daily basis
 - Will release and discuss numbers on a weekly basis on Thursdays
 - Stated that they want to maintain full transparency – but need to follow the guidelines they're given.

Question and Answer Session (paraphrased as best I can):

- Q: What is the best guess as to the level of compliance with the essential business and stay at home orders?
 - A: Feels that it is good based on the short window that it has been in place, will be monitoring as we go.
- Q: Based on statement we're at 60% capacity – is the 40% that is left going to be enough? Can they share more details on increase in beds and capacity?
 - A: They are putting together their plan now, will have more data to share in coming days. Stressed that they are not surprised by the increase and trends

based on the data they've been collecting. Bottom Line: there is not enough capacity today, so they are looking at all available options.

- Q: Pharmacies and Minute Clinics are seeing increase in people coming and are in need of more guidance – what to say to them?
 - A: Working with pharmacies and Minute Clinic providers for best practices on patients mixing in stores. Stressing best use of drug resources as well on the pharmacy level.
 - Dr. Acton stressed that people should be contacting their primary care provider first – via phone call or telemedicine. If you don't have a primary care doctor, call the Federal Health Center number (NEED TO FIND THIS)
 - Also stated that they are starting to get more data on symptoms – on top of the combo of fever/headache/bodyache they are seeing more people with gastro-intestinal issues and fatigue. Gathering info from hospitals daily.
 - Bottom Line: IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL, STAY HOME
- Q: Based on tweets and comments from the Governor and President – are they really aligned in their thoughts and directions?
 - A: Governor feels their messages are not inconsistent with each other – both understand the need/want to get back to normal; our collective physical health is tied to a healthy economy.
 - Protective steps being taken now that have short term economic consequences outweigh long term consequences of an unchecked response to the virus.
 - We are at war with an enemy – science is telling us these preventative measures are the right path to get back to getting people back to work.
- Q: President has stated that he wants the economy up and running by Easter (April 12th) – is that enough time?
 - A: Balancing want vs. reality; they are using Ohio's data to guide them to make the best possible decisions.

At this point camera cut away to an empty office for the last five minutes of the video.