



Public Health Brief

Richard O. Johnson, M.D., MPH

Public Health Officer

Office: 530-694-2146, Ext 249

e-mail: rjohnson@alpinecountyca.gov

Nichole Williamson

HHS Director

Office: 530-694-2235

24/7/365 Emergency Contact Numbers

Dr. Johnson's cell: (760) 914-0496

Dispatch: 530-694-2231, Ext 330



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Hope Amidst the COVID-19 Crisis – How to Get There

Yogi Berra, the baseball playing philosopher (and many others), have said, "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future". Uncharted territory lies ahead. We are beginning to appreciate that we are in a marathon, that this is not a sprint that will be over by Easter Sunday. A vision of the struggle that lies before us is becoming clearer. At the same time, in order to make it through the tough times, we need to focus on what life will be like after the pandemic, and the necessary steps we must take to get there.



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Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281

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Crisis

We live in a world filled with sophisticated data and modeling. In addition, we all experience the overwhelming volume of information put out on social media. Some is helpful, but much of it hinders our work together in reaching the post-pandemic goal.

What do the current statistics show?

- Since the first deaths 6 weeks ago in the US, we as a nation are now experiencing over 500 tragic deaths per day.
- A peak in the number of infections and deaths is predicted to be at least several weeks away.
- Without social or physical distancing measures, the number of deaths in the US is predicted to be as high as several million over the next 12-18 months.
- It is beginning to appear that earlier steps to order stringent social distancing measures are beginning to have an effect by reducing new infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.
- With social or physical distancing measures, the number of deaths in the US is predicted to be on the order of 100,000 – 200,000.
- The death (fatality) rate for seasonal influenza is about 0.1%, with estimates of 30,000 – 60,000 persons dying from the flu and complications this 2019-2020 season so far, with over 130 children included.
- The death rate from COVID-19 appears to be about 1.38%, so more than 10 times higher. Children are less commonly affected, but seniors dramatically impacted. The death rate for ages 50-54 is 1.3%, for ages 60-64 is 4%, for 70-74 is 8.6%, and >80 is 13.4%. Much of the burden falls on those with the most severe underlying medical conditions such as heart or lung disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, and obesity.



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Hope



Uncertainty in the time course of the epidemic, its duration, and the peak of healthcare system utilization and deaths is large this early in the epidemic. Given this, experts are making the following predictions:

- Even with social distancing measures enacted and sustained, the peak demand for hospital services due to the COVID-19 pandemic in many parts of the nation is likely going to substantially exceed capacity. That is the bad news.
- The good news. As of now, models predict that California will not face a shortage of intensive care beds at its peak. Credit goes to Governor Newsom's "Stay at Home" order, and continued adherence to social distancing at least through mid-May. California currently has about 75,000 acute care hospital beds, and utilizing local, state, and federal resources, that is expected to swell to 125,000 beds. Without the order, assumptions would be that 700,000 hospitals beds would be needed! Planning scenarios indicate that California's peak will not come until the second half of April, giving us more time to prepare for this surge in cases.



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- Most models anticipate a lull in activity during the warmer summer months, with a resurgence in the cooler fall and winter months coinciding with the next influenza season. That's the bad news. The good news is that this next peak of activity will potentially be different:
 - The capacity of our healthcare system will be enhanced.
 - Testing should be widely available with results in minutes and not days.
 - Various medications for treatment should have undergone trials and be available.
 - Vaccine development should be well underway and product eventually available, first for healthcare workers including first responders, and then for the general public, with prioritization by risk.

- A big unknown – will the virus just disappear at some point, or will it continue to cause infections for years to come?

- What's at the end of the coronavirus tunnel?
 - [https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/health/story/2020-03-29/end-of-coronavirus-pandemic-what-will-new-normal-look-like?utm_source=CalMatters+Newsletters&utm_campaign=054bba5dcb-WHATMATTERS NEWSLETTER&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_faa7be558d-054bba5dcb-150405531&mc_cid=054bba5dcb&mc_eid=d1cec2129a](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/health/story/2020-03-29/end-of-coronavirus-pandemic-what-will-new-normal-look-like?utm_source=CalMatters+Newsletters&utm_campaign=054bba5dcb-WHATMATTERS%20NEWSLETTER&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_faa7be558d-054bba5dcb-150405531&mc_cid=054bba5dcb&mc_eid=d1cec2129a)

- [How the World Will Look After the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

- [The USG Must Prepare Now for the Next Pandemic](#)

- [The Roadmap to Reopening](#)

How Are We Going to Get There? HOLD THE LINE!!!

This brief article (shared by Dr. Richard Harvey) makes some good points and may be relevant to Alpiners who because we are relatively untouched, feel they can "cheat" the guidelines if only just a little bit. This was sent out to Teachnet by a biology professor on the UCB campus, who is sharing it with all his students. It appears some young people (and maybe some older people, too) do not realize how serious it is not to "cheat" even a little or take unnecessary risks. Please take three minutes to read this.

<https://elemental.medium.com/hold-the-line-17231c48ff17>



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