

## Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call

**Betsy Covington opened the call with the following poem:**

**Small Kindnesses, by Danusha Lamèris.**

**Published September 22, 2019, in *The New York Times Magazine*.**

I've been thinking about the way, when you walk  
down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs  
to let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you"  
when someone sneezes, a leftover  
from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying.  
And sometimes, when you spill lemons  
from your grocery bag, someone else will help you  
pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other.  
We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot,  
and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile  
at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress  
to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder,  
and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass.  
We have so little of each other, now. So far  
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.  
What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these  
fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here,  
have my seat," "Go ahead – you first," "I like your hat."

### **National and/or State News Update-Ben Moser**

Ben gave the following updates concerning the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 from national, state, and local news sources:

#### **New York Times:**

- At least 942 new coronavirus deaths and 37,237 new cases were reported in the United States on Sept. 22, 2020. Over the past week, there have been an average of 41,481 cases per day, an increase of 13 percent from the average two weeks earlier.
- As of Wednesday morning, more than 6,917,800 people in the United States have been infected with the coronavirus and at least 200,700 have died, according to a New York Times database.
- In 18 states and territories, including Alabama, cases are higher and staying high
- In 2 states and territories cases are higher but going down
- In 13 states and territories cases are lower but going up
- In 22 states and territories, including Georgia, cases are lower and staying low

## Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call

### Elevated Issue of Local Concern or Awareness-Ben Moser

- And for the elevated issue of local concern:
- Two articles from the Washington Post
- So far, public health experts have found little evidence that the disease (COVID-19) is spreading inside school buildings, and the rates of infection are far below what is found in the surrounding communities.
- This early evidence, experts say, suggests that opening school may not be as risky as many have feared and could guide administrators as they charter the rest of what is already an unprecedented school year.
- “Everyone had a fear there would be explosive outbreaks of transmission in the schools. In colleges, there have been. We have to say that to date, we have not seen those in the younger kids and that is a really important observation,” said Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.
- So good news there about lack of spread in schools. In the next article the news is not so good.
- Progress in slowing the march of the novel coronavirus has stalled in much of the United States, and the pathogen is spreading at dangerous rates in many states as autumn arrives and colder weather — traditionally congenial to viruses — begins to settle across the nation, public health data shows. Organizations that track the virus, including The Washington Post, have logged recent increases in case numbers and test positivity rates — worrisome trends as the United States on Tuesday surpassed the grim milestone of 200,000 deaths. Hospitalizations and deaths remain lower nationally than at their midsummer peak, but those numbers always lag several weeks behind trends in new infections.
- The global picture has reaffirmed that COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, is not about to fade away. Countries that had been successful early in the pandemic in driving down viral transmission — such as France, Spain and Israel — are struggling with new waves of cases and instituting new shutdowns. Most people remain susceptible to infection, and the virus is highly opportunistic.
- “No country is safe,” said Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. “No country at this point can ever relax and assume the worst is behind them”
- It is too soon to know whether a major autumn surge in infections, something long feared among infectious-disease experts, has started on a broad national scale. Short-term statistical trends can be influenced by quirks in testing and reporting. Moreover, experts caution that they cannot predict human behavior and that any forecast beyond a few weeks is speculative.

## Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call

### **Economic Sector and Impact Area Updates**

#### **Public:**

#### **Columbus Consolidated Government Update-Mayor Skip Henderson**

Mayor Henderson gave the following updates:

- Columbus had one of the lowest positive totals yesterday with 9 new cases.
- The 7-day rolling average dropped to 16. The 14-day threshold per 100,000 cases is down to 126. The target is 100.
- There have been 166 total deaths in Muscogee County due to COVID-19.
- The hospitalization rate continues to stay at a plateau.
- Things are looking better but we must stay vigilant.
- The city is hoping to have the natatorium open by Saturday.
- The city is working on a safe alternate plan for Halloween using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Details will be released next week. The plan is for a drive-thru Halloween on October 24.
- The biggest concern the city faces right now because of COVID-19 is the 2020 Census. The Columbus area census office is in the bottom three in terms of response rate. We stand to lose congressional seats and millions of dollars to serve the underserved.
- Fair Count Georgia and the City of Columbus will host an event at the Columbus Civic Center parking lot this Saturday. They will be offering free COVID-19 testing, free flu shots and an opportunity to complete the 2020 Census. The layout will keep the COVID-19 testing separate from the flu shots. There will be giveaways for people who register for the census. There is only one week left until the census deadline.

#### **Muscogee County School District Update-Dr. David Lewis**

Dr. Lewis gave the following updates:

- The remainder of students who chose in person instruction returned to school this past Monday.
- One half of the student population is virtual, and one half is receiving in person instruction.
- There have been two positive confirmed COVID-19 cases. They have been isolated and all necessary steps have been taken. Everything is going well.
- Reminder to parents to keep children at home if they are not feeling well.
- Appreciates the continued support and patience of the community as they move forward.

## Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call

### **Non-Profit:**

#### **Food**

##### **Feeding the Valley Update-Frank Sheppard**

Frank gave the following updates:

- Things are going well at Feeding the Valley and they continue to be stay busy. They are at 50% above their normal monthly distributions.
- This Saturday, monthly food distribution will be held at the Central Activity Center in Russell County (Phenix City) Alabama beginning at 9:00am. This is for Alabama residents only.
- On Monday, there will be food distribution at Open Door Community House, Warren Williams Apartments and Chase Homes. All in Muscogee County (Columbus) Georgia.
- On Tuesday, there will be food distribution at the EJ Knight Senior Homes and Nicholson Terrace. All in Muscogee County (Columbus) Georgia.

#### **Housing**

##### **Home for Good/United Way Update-Pat Frey**

Pat gave the following updates:

- Home for Good hosted an Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program CARES Act Funding information session on Wednesday, September 23, 2020.
- Below is the link to the Home for Good website page containing all the information from this morning as well as the ESG CARES Handbook and several other documents of interest.
- Please let them know if they can be of any assistance.
- <http://www.homeforgoodcv.org/emergency-solutions-grants-program-cares-act-funding-session/>

##### **Grants/Projects Update-Betsy Covington**

Betsy gave the following updates:

- This week a grant was awarded to 211, a program of United Way, to enable a targeted media campaign to increase awareness of and access to essential community services.
- Grants awarded to date total \$1,155,000.
- For details on grants, donating to the fund or if you are an agency that needs assistance go to [cfcv.com/coronavirus](http://cfcv.com/coronavirus)

## Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call

### **Making Connections (Open Forum) Updates**

#### **Department of Public Health (Columbus Health Department) Update-Jack Lockwood**

Jack gave the following updates:

- Reminder of the 211 Spanish support services.
- The health department has a resource person who works directly with people who have been affected by COVID-19 in different ways. The resource person uses 211 as a resource.
- The Columbus Health Department will be at the event that the Mayor mentioned on Saturday. They will be administering flu shots and conducting COVID-19 testing.
- The Department of Public Health website has a daily status report. The report has a county indicator report that shows trends and in-depth information.