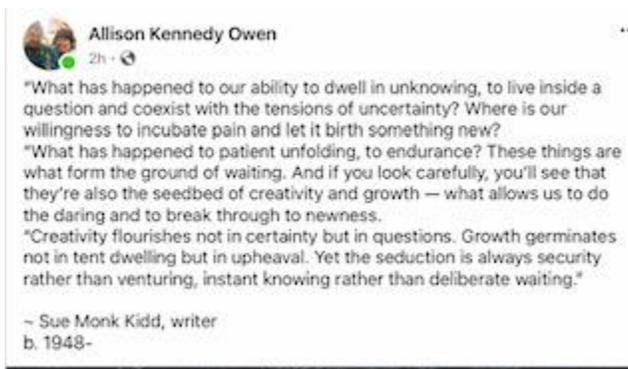


## Coronavirus Response Update Call

**The Weekly Coronavirus Response Update Call has changed to a Bi-Weekly (every other Wednesday) format.  
The next call will be Wednesday, February 17, 2021**

**Excerpt read by Betsy Covington during opening of the call:**



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

Ben gave the following updates concerning the coronavirus that causes COVID-19:

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

- At least 3,406 new coronavirus deaths and 114,173 new cases were reported in the United States on February 2, 2021. Over the past week, there has been an average of 141,137 cases per day, a decrease of 30 percent from the average two weeks earlier. As of Wednesday morning, more than 26,472,700 people in the United States have been infected with the coronavirus according to a New York Times database.
- In 2 states, including Alabama, new cases are higher and staying high.
- In 47 states and territories, including Georgia, new cases are higher but going down.
- In 6 states and territories cases are lower and staying low.
- The United States continues to see steep reductions in new cases. For the first time since November, the country is averaging fewer than 150,000 cases a day.
- Going into Monday, 47 states were reporting sustained declines in cases. The other three were mostly flat. But the continued spread of new variants has scientists deeply worried about the months ahead.
- Deaths remain near record levels. More than 90,000 coronavirus deaths have been announced so far in 2021. Over the course of the pandemic, a higher percentage of residents has tested positive in North Dakota than in any other

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state. But in recent days, North Dakota has averaged about 115 cases a day, the third-lowest per capita rate of any state. • About 1.3 million people are receiving a vaccine dose in the United States every day. Less than 2 percent of the country has been fully vaccinated.

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

- Elevated issue –The Variant threat – from mprnews.org
- Coronavirus cases are falling and vaccination numbers are rising. That's good news, right?
- Yes, but COVID-19 strains that are believed to be more transmissible have public health experts warning about a possible new surge in cases.
- A new coronavirus variant first found in South Africa has now been discovered in the United States. That variant joins others from the U.K. and Brazil that have been found in the U.S. The Brazil variant was discovered in Minnesota.
- MPR News host Cathy Wurzer spoke with Michael Osterholm, an expert in infectious diseases at the University of Minnesota. He also served on the Biden transition coronavirus advisory board.
- You were quoted in The New York Times this week that we should plan for the worst-case scenario. But cases are falling and vaccination rates are rising. What worries you the most in the coming weeks?
- Part of the situation we have right now is what I call a shifting baseline. Remember back last April, and we had 32,000 cases a day and we thought the house was on fire, couldn't get any worse. Then we dropped to 22,000 new cases a day by Memorial Day, with people in the state of pandemic fatigue, pandemic anger, not thinking this was really truly a pandemic.
- Then look what happened: By July, we hit 70,000 cases and said "My, this can't happen." Again, this is by far worse than we saw in the spring.
- Then we got case numbers down to about 26,000 a day around Labor Day. And then we quickly jumped up to 200,000 cases a day. We thought "Oh, this is the house is on fire, this can't get any worse." And then we watch cases come down to 150,000, early December. And then we went up to 300,000 cases in in early January.
- Now we're down to 150,000 cases, which surely feels better than 300,000 cases. But this is our new baseline. And this is what we'll jump off on with the next challenge. And these new variants, we're seeing these mutated viruses are much more infectious and do actually produce much more serious illness. And I anticipate over the next six to 14 weeks, the darkest days of this pandemic are going to occur.
- Therefore, a reminder that even though our numbers are coming down and we all want this to be over – Remain vigilant, wear your mask, social distance, be aware of overcrowding enclosed and/or poorly ventilated spaces and please take the vaccine when it is available to you and encourage others to do the same.

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

#### **Public:**

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

Mayor Henderson gave the following updates:

- Columbus has done a good job of keeping the numbers as low as they have been.
- However, it has been a roller coaster ride and the numbers have been affected by holidays and gatherings. We are presently dealing with the surge that was created during the holiday season.
- Area numbers are improving. The 7-day rolling average is 72(the lowest it has been in several weeks). Before Christmas, the 7-day rolling average was in the teens.
- Hospitalizations are easing somewhat. Kudos to local hospitals and medical personnel. They have become effective and efficient in treating COVID-19 patients and getting them out of the hospital and back home.
- For protection from COVID-19, the city has canceled a couple of long standing indoor athletic events that were scheduled for our community.
- Vaccinations stay on the projected track. The vaccine will not be widely available until late spring or early summer.
- The city along with Columbus Emergency Management has formed a great partnership with local hospitals and the Department of Public Health. They were able to get 500 people vaccinated recently using a drive thru method at the Columbus Civic Center. They plan to use this same method to get 5,000 -7,000 people a day vaccinated once the vaccine becomes widely available.
- The Mayor pledges that they are working on alternative vaccine notification methods for people without access to technology.
- Right now, vaccinations are by appointment only. This works best for the number of vaccines that are available.
- When the vaccine becomes widely available, the plan is to set up walk up sites around the city, to ensure that every resident in Muscogee County, Georgia who wants the vaccine has access.
- The Department of Public Health needs volunteers for outlining counties in the health district.

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

Dr. Lewis gave the following updates:

- The school district reopened in full last week with the Choice Model. This has been successful. However, the school district has seen a few minor infections.
- They will remain vigilant and continue to work with the medical community and their medical panel to help inform their decisions.
- School district nurses have completed training to assist with vaccinations of school district employees once the vaccine is available.

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- Throughout the pandemic, with school closures and virtual learning, students have experienced learning losses in various degrees. The school district is working on a plan (with Cares Act 2 funding) to reimagine their summer program. Community partners have stepped up and volunteered to be a part of that plan.
- The school district has a big concern with some school district employees who are eligible to get the vaccine but are hesitant. They will continue to work on educating employees on the importance and the value of getting vaccinated.

### **Non-Profit:**

#### **Food**

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

Frank gave the following updates:

- Food distributions in Clay County, Georgia and Quitman County, Georgia today and tomorrow.
- Regular monthly food distributions took place the last two weekends in Phenix City, Alabama and Columbus, Georgia.
- Feeding the Valley is conducting business as usual and everything is going well.
- Darden Restaurants recently donated a 26-foot refrigerated box truck to Feeding the Valley to help with their mobile food pantry.
- Due to COVID-19, the annual Empty Bowl Fund Raiser has been canceled for 2021.
- The Driven to End Hunger Car Show has been postponed until fall 2021 pending the status of COVID-19 at that time.
- The Outrun Hunger 5K Run scheduled for the first Saturday in April will be virtual again this year.
- If anyone has question about any of the events, please call Feeding the Valley at 706-561-4755.

#### **Health**

##### **St. Francis-Emory Healthcare Update-Melody Trimble**

Melody gave the following updates:

- St. Francis is approaching their one-year anniversary as St. Francis Emory Healthcare. It also has been almost one year that we have been in the pandemic.
- Advocating the vaccine to help eradicate COVID-19.
- Presently, 45% of their team has been vaccinated.
- St. Francis Columbus Clinic will start vaccinating patients today.
- The number of positive cases is going down slightly.
- Reminder to remain vigilant by washing hands, wearing a mask, practicing social distancing and getting the vaccine when it becomes available.
- Reminder to not delay care and to continue to work together.

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### Housing

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

Pat gave the following updates:

- Semi-Annual Continuum of Care Meeting, Thursday, February 11, 2021, 2:00pm via Zoom <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ga-505-coc-semi-annual-meeting-registration-135700314293>
- Annual Point in Time Count, Tuesday, February 16 and Wednesday, February 17, 2021. Link to sign up to volunteer: [www.homeforgoodcv.org](http://www.homeforgoodcv.org)
- Point in Time Count Information Presentation



PIT-Count  
presentation inform

- Home for Good Calendar: <http://www.homeforgoodcv.org/calendar/>

### Grants/Projects Update-Betsy Covington

Betsy gave the following updates:

- The grant round cycle has been changed to align with the bi-weekly calls. However, if immediate help is needed please contact the Coronavirus Response Fund.
- This week's grant awards total \$32,710. Total grants awarded to date total \$1,284,726.
- The five organizations receiving grants this week are Hope Springs Community Church, Cathedral of Prayer, Inc., St. Anne Community Outreach, Hope Harbour and Boys and Girls Club of the Chattahoochee Valley.
- AFLAC's \$100,000 match offer continues, matching donations to the Coronavirus Response Fund dollar-for-dollar, up to \$2,000 per gift.
- For details on grant awards, to donate or if you are a non-profit in need of assistance go to [cfcv.com/coronavirus](http://cfcv.com/coronavirus)

### Making Connections (Open Forum)

#### Update via email from Gwen Ruff

- COVID-19 Vaccine Registration Information and Assistance/Chattahoochee Valley Libraries  
<https://www.cvlga.org/blog/covid-19-vaccine-information/>