



City of Edmonds Media Release

Mayor's Office ~ 121 5th Ave N, Edmonds, WA 98020

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To: Media

Contact: Jamie Holter, City of Edmonds Communications

Jamie.holter@edmondswa.gov, 425.480.2397

EDMONDS MAYOR NELSON ISSUES STATEMENT – NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO RUSH TO RE-OPEN

Mayor Urges Elected Officials to Follow Governor's Orders

(Edmonds, WA) – Like many of you, I was disappointed following the April 21st Governor's Economic Recovery presentation because he did not say what we all really were hoping to hear: "The virus is dead. Washingtonians, go back to work and live your lives!" But, of course, he could not say that.

Why are we disappointed? Because we feel we are ready for this to be over. We have done our part, made sacrifices, given up work, closed our businesses, closed our schools, and we stayed home. So what's the hold up? Where is "the plan" to get the economy going again? And why is there no date for when this will end?

Those are real and valid concerns. The problem, though, is they are all based on an assumption. The assumption is that this virus is contained. And the fundamental problem with that assumption is that it is incorrect.

The Virus is Still Deadly

The virus has not been contained. It is just as lethal as ever.

There is no known cure, no vaccine. Yes, many, scientists all over the world are working on one, but until then, you need to hear these sobering facts. In the second week in April more people in our country died from this virus than from heart disease and from cancer. At least 22 people a day are still dying from this virus in Washington State alone. Approximately 200 people every day are catching this virus in our state which is still too high according to the medical

community. And the latest projections from the University of Washington Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation is to hold off on relaxing stay-at-home restrictions until after May 28th. If we reopen too soon, the virus will come roaring back. For example, we are seeing a second wave of infections in other countries that opened up too soon.

The spread of the virus is not going as planned because it does not follow a plan. It lives to merely find a host. It hides in places we don't expect and does not care where the hosts are or what they do for a living. The more hosts, the more it spreads; the more it spreads, the more it overwhelms our health care system and our way of life.

Opening Our Economy Too Early

Meanwhile, we have economists, not elected officials, not sheriffs, not doctors, but people whose day job is to study the economy telling us that we will cause more harm to our economy to open earlier rather than later.

Economist Michael R. Strain, director of economic policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute wrote that if we reopen too soon and this causes more spread of the virus, overloading our hospitals, and more loss of life, it will have a far worse impact on the economy. He states, "many people would be afraid to resume normal economic life regardless of what the government tells them. People would avoid dining out, shopping, taking public transportation, traveling and working from their offices...Getting back on track with an uninterrupted economic restoration is contingent on having won the battle against the virus."

Reckless Actions

At this critical time when our community is looking for a steady hand and when we are at our most vulnerable state, grasping for any sign of hope, the last thing we need is local elected officials openly defying state and county emergency orders designed to protect our health.

The chief law enforcement officer of our County, the Sheriff, recently stated he knows what is best to restart our economy and is refusing to follow lawful emergency orders designed to save lives. Another local official, whose job it is to pass laws, publicly stated they recently attended a party seemingly unaware they violated the stay-at-home law when the law actually requires them to...stay home.

These publicly defiant actions are sending a very harmful message during this critical time: they are suggesting you don't have to follow laws created to protect you and those around you from this virus.

Protecting Our Health Will Save Our Economy

Now is not the time to give in to this virus, to give up on our neighbors or our community. We need to keep on practicing social distancing, not moral distancing. We need to look out for one another now more than ever in Edmonds and beyond. We need to keep supporting our local businesses, keep supporting our first responders, and we will get through this difficult time in our lives.

We need to continue to trust our medical professionals that have helped us make it this far. They have guided our Governor's emergency decisions and they have saved countless lives.

Our State is working on a careful, phased-in approach to reopen when it is medically safe to do so, but until then we need to follow the stay-at-home order. Asking the Governor to set an arbitrary timetable, unsupported by medical data, which is not likely to be met, is misleading and gives false hope to our community.

I trust our Governor and support his leadership in getting us through these unprecedented times together.

Because the sooner we can protect everyone's health, the sooner our economy will truly recover.

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