

Chris Taggart

From: Anna Tuttle <aquailsong@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 8:43 AM
To: Chris Taggart; Amitava Roy; Anna Tuttle
Subject: Input for Commissioner's Meeting

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Ravalli County Commissioners



Good morning Chris,

Sorry for the delay, things are busy around here!

Per our conversation here is my input for the Commissioner's meeting with the Department of Public Health and the Board of Health, which will take place on 3/11/20:

We, my partner and I, were in Washington for two weeks, not far from the epicenter of the Coronavirus outbreak. When we started to realize that the situation was intensifying, we set up a makeshift decontamination area at our Airbnb, equipped with Clorox wipes, hands sanitizer, gloves, and Lysol, we sprayed/wiped all clothing, money, bought items with disinfectant, and wiped down door knobs, faucets, etc., and we stayed out of public places as much as possible. Our family may have felt that it was a little over the top but myself, as a nurse and my partner, a scientist that studies infectious diseases, we knew that being extra cautious was tedious but wise. As a precaution we attempted to get tested through the county public health department prior to returning home, however, that option was not available and there was no real guidance being shared with the public, which frankly, was disturbing since two of the family members that were present with us are immuno-compromised. The local facilities were not prepared, for example, the hospital where our family member had surgery was not screening visitors for recent travel to Asia, nor were they screening for symptoms of the virus. Also, businesses were not proactive in the least about preventing the spread of the virus.

We would have liked to have attended the meeting to give our feedback in person, however, we have chosen to self-isolate for two weeks until we are sure that we do not develop symptoms.

As someone who works directly with the elderly population and who just experienced firsthand an inefficient system, I am asking you to please put out a community-wide bulletin, to at the very least, request that those who have recently traveled outside of Montana self-isolate as much as possible- the public needs guidance during these times. We have many retirees who travel often and we need to attempt to protect those most vulnerable who live here. Also, proper hand-washing instruction would be helpful as this is something that many are not familiar with. It would also be helpful for the community to have easily accessible information, in one central location, about recommended hygienic practices. Businesses should also be educated about preventative measures. Among our friends in the valley we have observed an underlying panic about the virus outbreak, sharing our hygiene practices with them has empowered them with knowledge and has soothed some of their anxieties. Perhaps a well-circulated bulletin in the community from your office can have a similar effect and build confidence that our community is thinking ahead.

Also, we would like to commend Marcus Daly Hospital and the local Public Health Department for being proactive in initiating a plan so quickly, by requesting those who have traveled outside of the state to reschedule any medical appointments two weeks out- this makes us very proud of our small community and soothes some of our own concerns.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to share our input.

~Anna Tuttle, RN and Amitava Roy, PhD ~