



GEAUGA PUBLIC HEALTHSM

Promoting and Protecting Community Health

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Thomas Quade, MA, MPH, CPH, FRSPH
Health Commissioner

An Open Letter to the People of Geauga County, Ohio dated May 8, 2020

To All Who Live, Work, Play, or Pray in Geauga County:

We share this wonderful county, state, and country with one another. We have been blessed with many wonderful opportunities that we have created, together. I believe that, without exception, we all want to continue to share in the economic success, in the expression of our civil liberties, and in the security of our own and others' safety and health. We share these common health goals and these civic values and they are in no way indelibly mutually exclusive of one another.

The path forward is also one we will travel together as Americans. Whether we move forward with personal choices that express our independence or our sense of community, or both, our history with communicable disease outbreaks informs us that our path through and out of this current pandemic is one that will be more readily achieved if we move together with a common cause using shared best practices and strategies.

The public health leaders at the national, state, and local level learn more each day about this virus, its mechanisms of transmission, and its prevalence in the community. We do not value Constitutional Rights or personal freedoms any less than anyone else. Those American values are treasured and exercised by all of us. They are as durable as our history of public health in this country. Our nation's first local public health director was installed in Boston in 1799. He led a local disease control effort to prevent an outbreak of cholera. His name was Paul Revere.

What Paul Revere knew then and what we know now is that we can, without ceding those inherently American values and practices, work in unity as Americans, Ohioans, and Geaugans to protect one another when the circumstances of the times call us to collective action. There has been no great campaign in times of war or peace or in times of economic crisis or prosperity, where everyone was in agreement but we have shown that when we unite we can overcome adversity when it comes our way.

I ask you all to take action together, not because anyone ordered it and not because anyone feels like they're being called out, shamed, or "guilted" into action, but because we will all be better quicker if we choose for whatever the reason to act together. I am calling on you to please use the information that has been shared about how to protect one another to do just that. Let's avoid a second hump in that curve that you so effectively flattened once to assure healthcare capacity. Just because there is still room in the ICU doesn't mean that we want to use it. We may never know the people we have protected with our choice to practice distancing and wearing our masks. Those people are likely strangers to us but they are just as likely to mean the world to someone else.

Yours in Service,

Tom Quade,

Geauga County Health Commissioner