

The Commonsense Approach to COVID-19

The following letter comes from Stefani Pashman, CEO of the Allegheny Conference and I feel is very relevant for our businesses and communities as we head into the holiday shopping season.

COVID-19 cases are reaching record levels, and experts are predicting a surge through the holidays and into the new year. While a vaccine will eventually provide a solution to this persistent problem, the world – including those of us right here in the Pittsburgh region – is experiencing COVID-19 fatigue. Frankly, we're tired of staying away from our families and friends, we are tired of staying home, and we are tired of this pandemic's unknown trajectory.

But fatigue won't whisk the virus out the door. With winter approaching, we need to support each other, prioritize health and safety and preventive measures, and work to keep our economy functioning while remaining mindful of not only COVID-19, but also of COVID-19 fatigue.

This is easier said than done. As employers, perhaps we feel like we've aged years, instead of only the months that have passed, in 2020. It's on us, though, to power through. We lead by example, by perseverance, by optimism, by hope and by facts. And here are the facts:

- We have a world-class healthcare institutions that continue to discover new therapeutics and new treatment protocols to combat the virus. And vaccine researchers are working at record speeds to bring about a solution that will end this pandemic.
- We have improved the analytics behind our decision-making, helping us remain more informed of the hot spots and how to deliver contact tracing to limit spread.
- As a community, we have proven our vigilance against the virus and demonstrated strong compliance with the preventive measures. Our efforts in the spring helped infection rates decline and continued vigilance will impede rising cases.

We have the power to continue to curb the virus spread by making commonsense decisions.

Yes, we all need to wear masks, to social distance, to practice hand washing and overall good hygiene, especially with holidays approaching.

Here is what also matters: if you're exposed, get a test, separate from others for the CDC recommended quarantine period; and answer the phone and share with contact tracers the information they need to control the spread.

We call on all employers in the region to commit to these commonsense approaches and make it known to their employees and networks.

Coming together with a shared commitment to these actions will ultimately help us return to normalcy. Not a normalcy of fighting to contain a virus nor one where we have learned to live with it, but a normalcy where we've beaten and overcome the persistence of this pandemic. There is a light at the end of this tunnel. Perhaps it seems like we only can see a pinpoint of that light today, but it is still light. We will get to that light, and we need to stick together to reach it.

Stay vigilant, stay informed, stay the course and mask up.

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