

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Pandemic - Restless & Reckless

May 19, 2022. We are now entering into a new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic; the reopening of America. For the past two months my wife and I have faithfully followed recommended guidelines for social distancing, and for the most part it has not been a hardship. In fact very little in our daily lifestyle has changed.

We are both retired, so lost income is not an issue. We live in an area where the weather has been beautiful, so we are able to get outside and exercise on a regular basis. I am even back to enjoying my favorite pastime, golf. We both miss going out to local restaurants and sitting at the bar and having dinner, but most of all we miss visiting the grandchildren and having them visit us. Otherwise, life is good!

One of the symptoms of the COVID-19 virus, along with high temperature and shortness of breath, is cabin fever. Everyone is suffering from being confined and Zoom socializing; we are all anxious to resume direct interpersonal relationships. Everyone is Restless.

State and local officials are under enormous pressure to get the economy moving. That means opening businesses and getting people back to work with a big emphasis on safety. The medical advisors and experts are constantly reminding us that if social distancing guidelines are not followed that the rush to reopen could have catastrophic ramifications of a second wave of COVID-19 cases. Because medical experts rely on scientific data, the message is viewed as truthful but not what people want to hear. People are ready to return to a normal life now, not a year from now. Consequently the restless keep pushing the envelope.

As individuals we worry primarily about the virus might impact us and our families directly. And secondarily we are concerned about how actions or inactions will affect others. Unfortunately we seemed to have entered a time when the emphasis for a large segment of the population is solely on how it affects "me" with little or no consideration for others. I am older with pre-existing medical conditions, so I recognize that I am vulnerable and must be very cautious. For teenagers there is naturally not that same sense of personal fear but a seemingly lack of recognition of what it means to be a carrier and bringing the virus home to their parents or grandparents.

When I go to businesses open to the public places, such as the grocery store, I am pleased to see that nearly everyone is following the rules by keeping 6 foot distance and wearing a face mask. Of course these places have an ownership with a vested interest in enforcing compliance. There is little resistance and no pushback from customers because they recognize the greater good is play: businesses need to be open; people need to work; and customers need food and access to essential services.

The biggest abuse and the biggest danger lies with recreation; an area that a little sacrifice should be an easy consideration. Instead on weekends we see boats going by our home on the

Intracoastal Waterway packed with occupants and no one wearing protection. We witness groups protesting that beaches are closed. Beaches should be one the safest places to go except that the beach goers disregard the social distancing rules. We see marches on state capitals under guise of freedom speech and American liberty. Is there anything dumber than hundreds of demonstrators clustered together, not wearing masks and in some cases carrying assault weapons. Restlessness is transforming into recklessness.

Over the course of the past two months more and more uninformed people are starting to deem themselves to be more knowledgeable than the experts. The only real motivation is inconvenience that they are experiencing. So it is alright to be reckless.....or rather dumb!

Epilogue - The day after I wrote this piece I had two doctors appointments. The first was with the dermatologist who took my temperature and everyone was wearing masks. The second was a follow up appointment with the doctor who had stripped varicose veins from my right leg about 6 weeks ago. No one screened me on arrival and none of the staff, including the doctor, were wearing masks. I was astonished and later wrote a letter to the doctor to express my disappointment and his lack of consideration for an 81 year old patient with underlying conditions.