

22 Mar 2020

Phillip Brownlee
Medical Society of Sedgwick County
1102 S. Hillside
Wichita, KS 67211

Dear Mr. Brownlee:

We are writing this letter to you and the leadership of MSSC regarding the pandemic due to novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As has been widely reported, the pandemic due to this virus has spread globally and unfortunately it has now made its way to our fair city. We are urging you to encourage the Sedgwick County Commission to take action and limit the spread of this virus by issuing an order to shelter in place/stay at home for all but essential businesses and services.

This virus is expected to infect 40-60% of the US population. Putting the estimated mortality rate of 3.4%, it has been documented that 17% of those infected require hospitalization. Population data from 2017 indicates our county has 513,687 persons; this means 205,000 – 308,000 infected persons, of which as many as 52,000 people will require hospitalization.

The hospitals in Sedgwick County simply do not have the capacity to handle this extremely large number of patients, nor do they have enough personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the health care providers taking care of them. Please keep in mind that this tsunami of patients would be in addition to all the patients with other diseases seeking medical care (e.g, heart attacks, strokes, diabetic comas, etc). The system simply cannot support this surge and, simply put, people will die unnecessarily from treatable conditions.

The insufficient number of test kits limits our knowledge about the true scope of the disease in our community; nevertheless, we do know that this virus is spreading in our community already, and we expect patients with this disease to begin showing up with increasing frequency in the next 2 weeks. Once this occurs, it will be too late to blunt the impact on the health system.

For these reasons, we are asking the MSSC to urge the Sedgwick County Commission to follow the lead of other area governments and issue a stay-at-home order immediately. The lives of our citizens depend on it.

Sincerely,

Maha Assi, MD
Infectious Disease Consultants, PA

Margaret Hagan, MD
Infectious Disease Consultants, PA

Shelley Jones, MD
Infectious Disease Consultants, PA

Thomas A. Moore, MD, FACP, FIDSA

Clinical Professor of Medicine
University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita Campus

Jerry D. Peterie, MD, FACP
Infectious Disease Consultants, PA