



The purpose of “social distancing” – which is being implemented across the country, from the cancellation of “March Madness” to the closure of schools – is to limit the spread of COVID-19 (the new novel coronavirus) without overwhelming health care.

Help prevent spread by “social distancing”

Country tries to slow Covid-19 spread by limiting public interaction

In more than 20 years as a community journalist, I’ve never been as inundated with news releases as I have for the past week about COVID-19, the new novel coronavirus. Even for my e-mail – which regularly receives all kinds of news from Minnesota and across the country – this was unprecedented.

Since this is an evolving situation, this makes it even more challenging. In this issue of the Voice, on Page 2, we are publishing what we consider the most significant news – but we could not print all of the Covid-19 news this week, and some of it is changing very, very rapidly.

From the first case of Covid-19 in Minnesota on Friday, March 6, to the first case in Stearns County on Thursday, March 12, cases in the state have exploded: 2 cases and 80 people tested as of Monday, March 9; 14 cases and 555 tested as of Friday, March 13; 35 cases and 1,422 tested as of Sunday, March 15; and 54 cases and 1,893 tested as of Monday, March 16. The World Health Organization declared Covid-19 as a pandemic on Wednesday, March 11, and President Donald Trump declared it a national emergency on Friday, March 13.

We should all be prepared and not panic. Hopefully, the “social distancing” measures being taken locally and across the country will effectively slow the spread of Covid-19. It’s important to know that the purpose of these precautions is to slow the spread, keeping the number of people

infected and needing health care from overwhelming our medical system, both locally, statewide, and across the country.

“The only reason to do social distancing is not because we think we can affect the overall numbers of infections,” said writer and economist Malcolm Gladwell. “We’re trying to slow the rate of infection to limit the effect on the health care system. The chances are you’re going to get it (Covid-19). They’d just rather you get it two months from now, not two weeks with everyone else. That’s the reason to do social distancing.”

“We’re going to get through this, but it’s going to be a challenge,” added Dr. Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota professor, the former state epidemiologist, and a national expert on infectious diseases.

Hopefully, these Covid-19

precautions will work so effectively that the current fears, in few weeks’ hindsight, will look overblown. We might never know about the success of our current prevention efforts, but the old saying rings true now: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Obviously, we will be continuing to cover the Covid-19 pandemic in our next issues. Without local events, without school, without extracurriculars, etc., there might not be much else to cover.

If you have a Covid-19 story, experience, or picture you want to share, please send it to editor@evwvoice.com.

Remember to be safe; to drink plenty of water; to get plenty of sleep; and to practice good hygiene (washing your hands and avoid touching your face). And remember: it’s better to be safe than sorry.

~ *Michael Jacobson*