

Greetings,

For those of us who have lost track because every day feels a little like the last one, today is Wednesday, April 1, and I'm happy to report that March is over. I know that time is passing very slowly right now, but it is passing and we are progressing to the other end of this challenging circumstance.

To begin today's update, I want to give you some quick information about the Gresham firefighter who tested positive. I spoke with this firefighter by phone yesterday, and he reported that his symptoms were reasonably mild, and that he is recovering nicely. Great news for sure. I'm very thankful for all of those who are serving on the front lines of this pandemic, who are very clearly demonstrating their dedication to the service of others, in the toughest of circumstances.

On another note, today is "Census Day" in the United States. If you have not yet completed your Census form, I strongly urge you to do so. Not only is it the law, but the Census helps determine important elements of representation for us, including how many Members of Congress we have representing Oregon in Washington DC, and how much federal funding we receive right here in Gresham. Our current national emergency is a perfect example of how these population formulas are used to distribute funds. One critical way for you to help your hometown right now, and in the future, is to complete the Census. Everybody counts no matter their background or age, from babies to seniors. Please complete the form right away. For more information, you can visit GreshamOregon.gov/census.

The last thing I want to mention today is that we are not out of the woods yet, and that it is as important right now to follow the stay-at-home order as it was on day-one. I know it's tough. In normal circumstances, we can't wait to get some downtime at home. But when that goes on for days and weeks, it gets incredibly tough. But limiting your contacts with people outside of your household is the single best way to protect yourself and others right from this very dangerous virus.

We have a chance to slow the spread and avoid overwhelming our emergency health system, but we have to strictly adhere to the stay-at-home order if we are going to have any hope of doing so. That one extra unnecessary errand you run right now could be putting your life at risk, and the lives of those around you. We can do this, but it will require strong collective action. Stay home, save lives.

As I have said all along, there is hope on the horizon. One big difference between this virus and the 1918 epidemic is the advancements we've seen in medical sciences, computing, and technology in the past 102 years. Not only has our ability to develop effective therapies and vaccines improved substantially, but the global scientific community is working together right now on this single goal. Our collective efforts right now are critical in slowing the spread of the virus, keeping the medical system functioning within its capacity, and buying time for broader solutions to be developed, tested, and implemented.

One small example of those advancements is Abbott Lab's rapid testing device, which can produce test results within 15 minutes of testing. You probably saw some news stories about this technology over the weekend. I'm very happy to report that one of the first places in the nation to deploy this device is the Legacy Health System, which includes Mount Hood Medical Center. The priority for testing remains the same for now, but the ability to get good results rapidly will definitely help their work.

That's all I have for today. Stay strong and stay safe. Take the stay-at-home order to heart. It is saving lives, and your continued actions will save even more lives. You are all constantly in my thoughts. I pray for your families, and for your health and safety. God bless.