

# Mayors' Video Question & Answer Document

**April 15, 2020**

The first half of this document contains a summary of the questions and answers that were addressed by County Mayor Durrett and City Mayor Pitts in a video on April 13. The second half of the document addresses questions and answers that were either not addressed in the video or provide answers with lengthier responses from healthcare professionals.

The questions were submitted by citizens after requests by the County and City through their social media pages, the local media, and the Clarksville Area Chamber of Commerce.

## **PART I**

### **Mayors' Video Q&A Session, Monday, April 13, 2020**

#### **Topic: Industry**

**Mayors' Video Response:** We have been in constant contact with our local industries. Both in one on one conversations and as a group. Based on federal Department of Homeland Security guidelines, the majority of our industries that are open are deemed part of the Critical Manufacturing Sector.

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

Is (manufacturer name) listed under essential or nonessential?

#### **Topic: Big Box Stores/ Car Dealers/ Businesses People Say Should Not Be Open**

**Mayors' Video Response:** We have done a lot in this area. The local orders actually go further than the state order in the fact that we have some occupant load criteria in the local orders. We have also been in direct contact with many of our Big Box retailers by phone and are doing random inspections of those facilities. Car sales are deemed essential by the Homeland Security guidelines. They still must meet the social distancing order and occupant load order.

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

Why are (big box store names) allowed to have 100's of people inside at one time? At what point will our local governments step in and enforce the number of people allowed in the store?

Why can (big box store names) continue to sell non-essential items like clothes? (This seems unfair to other clothing retailers who have been ordered to close.)

If only "essential employees" are supposed to be out working at their "essential jobs," why are all the auto salesrooms open in Clarksville and actively encouraging the public to come in and buy cars?

Is there more that local government agencies can do to prevent employers from using loopholes about what's "essential" to keep their businesses open? Can you send someone into the business to verify if it is essential or not?

#### **Topic: Stronger Measures/ Too many people out/Lack of social distancing**

**Mayors' Video Response:** Based on what we are seeing, we are seeing the curve flattening and most people are adhering to the state and local orders. You always have some people that don't follow rules. It's a crime to shoplift, but people still do it. Our policies on enforcement are good and consistent and we will continue to enforce them.

**Both of us have been out and about. We have made personal visits and phone calls to local businesses; we have closed all buildings and playgrounds in all of our parks.**

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

What will we do to enforce stay at home?

Why are so many people out and about?

Have the Mayors drove around and seen for themselves whether people are conducting 'Social Distancing'?

Will there be stricter rules put in place to enforce social distancing?

Why haven't we gone on complete lock down?

#### **Topic: Constitutional Rights / Has Response Been Out of Proportion**

**Mayors' Video Response:** Prior to this pandemic, government had rules, there are rules about uses of property, how you build buildings, how you sell food, operate restaurants and more. The rules regarding closing businesses and social distancing are not taken lightly and are only put in place on a temporary basis. They are here to protect the health and welfare of ALL of those in our community.

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

How did local mayors get the power to violate citizens constitutional rights, such as denying their first amendment right of assembly and the right to freely express their religion?

Do you expect the city and county to have lawsuits filed against them for violating these constitutional rights? Does the city plan on compensating churches for lost tithes and all non-essential businesses for lost revenue?

Isn't it dangerous to lockdown a city, county, state or country based on incomplete data and half-truths?

When are you going to release the full reports about the two deaths in Montgomery County, with information about underlying conditions?

Can you confirm the tests being performed are specifically for COVID-19 Sars 2? Why not release more data about testing results?

When the President said "the solution cannot be worse than the problem," don't you think an unnecessary financial crisis is exactly what he was referring to?

#### **Topic: Medical Related -- Hospital Capacity/Ventilators/Testing**

**Mayors' Video Response: Tennova is licensed for 270 beds. Their current patient population is somewhere between 100-120 patients. There is room for more patients depending on the need and the staffing capabilities.**

**Tracking COVID-19 Cases: Neither the City nor the County monitors the movement of people who are infected, but when test results come in, cases are investigated, the tracing of contacts and monitoring close contacts of cases are being done by the Tennessee Department of Health.**

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

Is our local hospital at, or over, capacity right now with covid-19 cases?

Does our hospital have adequate supply of ventilators?

At some point will there be universal testing?

Where can we buy face masks?

What are the recommendations for wearing a mask?

When will there be an adequate supply of tests to see if you have antibodies or have already had an unknown mild case and are now immune to covid-19?

Will there be an antibody test available for all citizens, before we end the lockdown?

Are the contacts of confirmed cases being traced? If so, how are the contacts advised regarding the possibility they were exposed to Covid-19?

Does the city or the country monitor the movement of people who are infected?

#### **Topic: Protocol If Crisis Worsens/ Process for Lifting Orders/ Economic Relief**

**Mayors' Video Response: We have looked at additional orders and basically have them ready to go. We will issue new orders if the conditions warrant. Obviously having some type of antibody testing would be good, but we are not sure when or if that will happen.**

**We monitor data every day and if we feel we can start minimizing some of the orders, we will do so. One of the most important things these orders do is limit the shortage of medical care and equipment. So far, we are not at the point of being critically short when it comes to beds, ventilators, PPE etc.**

**We are working on some local programs that would give some additional economic relief to some of our businesses and their workforce that are above and beyond what the federal government has put in place.**

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

What is the protocol in Montgomery County and Clarksville if this COVID-19 gets worse?

When can we end the social distancing and closures of non-essential services? Outline the process you will take and the considerations and data you will review in lifting the shelter-at-home order.

What is the goal to ensure the safety of everyone once we go back to normal?

Would each of you describe what post-pandemic actions you will pursue that are intended to minimize adverse economic and social impact upon our community that may result from any future pandemic event?

### **Topic: Going Back to Normal**

**Mayors' Video Remarks:** We all want to be back to normal. When that happens, it will not be lifting all of the orders at once. Some businesses will be allowed to open before others. We must make sure that when our data shows we can start relaxing the orders, that we don't over relax them and have another outbreak.

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

When can we end the social distancing and closures of non-essential services? Outline the process you will take and the considerations and data you will review in lifting the shelter-at-home order.

What is the goal to ensure the safety of everyone once we go back to normal?

Would each of you describe what post-pandemic actions you will pursue that are intended to minimize adverse economic and social impact upon our community that may result from any future pandemic event?

### **Topic: Small Business Owners/Workers**

**Mayors' Video Response:** As we just mentioned, the federal government has put some things in place to help employees and businesses and we are looking at some local programs as well. We know this virus is highly contagious and, in some cases, deadly. We cannot deny the hardship this places on employees and businesses, but we also cannot deny the fact that this virus is deadly.

#### *Summary of Topic Questions*

Will small businesses re-open this Wednesday?

Who gave you power to command me to not earn to feed my family and my ministry without compensating me? Why are you paid and I'm not?

Will salons and spas be opening up on the 15th?

The president is suggesting April 30th, shouldn't we be adhering to that as well?

## **PART II**

### **Additional questions and answers**

#### *Hospital / Medical Related*

**Is our local hospital at, or over, capacity right now with covid-19 cases?**

The hospital reports their census is down. Elective surgeries and procedures have been canceled and people are seeking other means for their primary care.

**I am currently 31 weeks pregnant. What reassurance can city officials offer that local hospitals won't try to exclude my husband from the delivery of our child in June?**

Hospital policy is not within our governance.

**Does our hospital have adequate supply of ventilators?**

The exact number of ventilators available to Tennova of Clarksville is a question for Tennova of Clarksville. Our goal is to slow the community transmission of COVID-19 thereby reducing the number of high-acuity patients that require artificial ventilation.

**At some point will there be universal testing?**

Universal testing has been discussed but we are not aware of testing in the absence of meeting symptoms criteria such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

**Please have an appropriate representative from Tennova Healthcare Hospital give a status on hospital capacity, use, and impact on other services.**

The hospital has a certificate of need for 270 beds. We know that they currently have 100 to 120 in-patients.

**Before the City/County is opened, will there be city/countywide testing for the Corvid-19?**

We don't know if or when testing will become available for everyone, therefore lifting the emergency conditions will not be contingent upon the availability of testing. If testing for COVID-19 remains limited, we encourage testing those at risk and our health care providers and first responders.

In the last five weeks, over 1,500 tests have been performed in Montgomery County. So far, 102 have come back negative and 1,297 have come back positive. Twenty-seven of those who tested positive have been cleared as recovered and there have been two COVID-19 related deaths. (April 15, 2020)

COVID-19 testing began in early March and will continue as long as testing is needed. The tests currently being performed let us know if a person has COVID-19. As of Sunday evening, the Tennessee Department of Health has received the results on 1,289 residents that were tested in our community that had COVID-19 symptoms. 97 of those tests or about 7.5% have come back positive for COVID-19. For more on testing, go to

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>

**Where can we buy face masks? Mail order sources and local drugstores are all sold out.**

Face coverings do not have to be masks. The CDC web site gives step by step guidance on making face coverings, some require no sewing.

**What are the recommendations for wearing mask?**

We believe that a facemask should be worn when in public.

**Are you aware that placing a coffee filter or paper towel between our face and a homemade facemask increases effectiveness?**

There are many different ways to make a face mask, we are not sure which of these materials or methods of filtering the air would be an advantage over the other. All masks seem to help in our cough and sneeze etiquette as well keep us from touching our face.

Knowing that we could spread COVID-19 to others even if we do not feel sick or have any outward symptoms, everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected, even though you may not have any outward symptoms.

Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker. We are trying to make certain those types of mask are available to healthcare workers and First Responders.

Continue to keep about 6 feet or more between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing. For more information on face masks, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

**I keep hearing that there are supplies being sent. Could you make sure that the home health companies are getting their share of PPE?**

There is no steady flow of PPEs to our community, however, we collaborate the EMA with all facilities and remain situationally aware of inventory and requests. Currently there are no reports about health facilities running out of needed PPE.

Our local health care partners, physicians, and clinics have been having weekly web meetings and conference calls. If one of our health care partners expresses that they're running low on PPE, members of our partnership have been very successful sharing resources and helping that clinic or home health agency find what they need.

**Are there any area doctors testing people that had similar symptoms months ago for possible immunity to covid-19 proving it has been here a while indicating the panic was unfounded?**

We're not aware of any doctors performing COVID-19 testing for people that had similar symptoms months ago. The tests that are currently being done detect if the person currently has the virus present in their body.

**When will there be an adequate supply of tests to see if you have antibodies or have already had an unknown mild case and are now immune to covid?**

We don't know the answer but we are monitoring the governments' progress in approving tests that are "Point of care" and that can prove immunity through antibody testing.

**Will there be an antibody test available for all citizens, before we end the lockdown?**

We just don't know about antibody testing, but we encourage all to seek the means available to them to assure that their family is safe and their risk to COVID-19 is low.

An antibody test to see if a person has immunity to COVID-19 was recently approved by the FDA. We don't know the number of antibody tests that Tennessee will be getting. The Tennessee Commissioner of health was quoted that this could be a game-changer (see article below). Along with giving a person some closure on a previous illness, studying the antibodies on people that successfully recovered could help develop therapy and treatment for others.

<https://fox17.com/news/local/tn-supplier-of-critical-covid-antibody-test-wants-lee-to-commit-to-wider-testing>

**Are the contacts of confirmed cases being traced? If so, how are the contacts advised regarding the possibility they were exposed to Covid-19?**

If the health department is made aware, they complete a thorough history, contacts, and potential exposures notify others if they are at risk for the community transmission of COVID-19. The details of their investigation can be found at the CDC website.

**Does the city or the country monitor the movement of people who are infected?**

Individuals are assessed and instructed in some cases to isolate at home, isolate from others within their home and how long to comply with isolation instructions.

Neither the city or the county monitors the movement of people who are infected, but when test results come in, cases are investigated, the tracing of contacts and monitoring close contacts of cases are being done by the Tennessee Department of Health. When a person has symptoms and gets a test, they are instructed to self-quarantine until those results come back. Fortunately, in Montgomery County, over 90% of those phone calls have been to inform the person that the test was negative. But the conversation is longer for those that tested positive with COVID-19. For those that test positive, isolation and quarantine guidelines are discussed for the infected person and the close contacts. For more information see the Tennessee Department of Health Weekly Situation Summary.

**Small Business owners/workers**

**I am wondering if my downtown business will be able to re-open this Wednesday? (April 15)**

Governor Lee's latest Executive Order keeps non-essential businesses closed through April 30, 2020. Montgomery County Mayor Jim Durrett also signed an Executive order on April 14, extending the Shelter at Home order through April 22.

**Who gave you power to command me to not earn to feed my family and my ministry without compensating me? Why are you paid and I'm not?**

Non-essential organizations were designated in guidance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Please clearly inform us about whether a beauty supply shop is a personal hygiene product seller or personal appearance product seller?**

Beauty supply shops are not a part of the essential list of organizations.

**Will salons and spas be opening up on April 15? I work as a massage therapist in a spa and I think that is too soon to be opening, especially since I have it's a hands-on trade.**

Governor Lee's latest Executive Order keeps non-essential businesses closed through April 30, 2020. Montgomery County Mayor Jim Durrett and City of Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts extended the Shelter at Home orders through April 22 and make week to week decisions about whether to extend their orders.

**The president is suggesting April 30, shouldn't we be adhering to that as well?**

That is only a suggestion. Governor Lee's latest Executive Order keeps non-essential businesses closed through April 30, 2020. Montgomery County Mayor Jim Durrett and Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts also signed Executive orders on April 14, extending the local Shelter at Home order through April 22.

## **Miscellaneous**

**If the President persuades the Governors to lift the "stay home" order, would you both honor that or keep in place "stay home" order longer?**

That would need to be assessed based on data with our healthcare community.

**We've heard that the virus can live on cardboard for approximately 24 hours, which provides information about packages, but is there any information about how long it lives on paper, such as newspapers, mail, receipts, etc.?**

According to Harvard Medical School, a recent study found that the COVID-19 coronavirus can survive up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel. Researchers also found that this virus can hang out as droplets in the air for up to three hours before they fall.

There's a lot we still don't know, such as how different conditions, such as exposure to sunlight, heat, or cold, can affect these survival times.

As we learn more, continue to follow the CDC's recommendations for cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects every day. These include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.

If surfaces are dirty, first clean them using a detergent and water, then disinfect them. A list of products suitable for use against COVID-19 is available here. This list has been pre-approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use during the COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition, wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water after bringing in packages, or after trips to the grocery store or other places where you may have come into contact with infected surfaces.

**How do you anticipate the upcoming budget year to play out?**

Based on the current economic conditions, we are anticipating less revenue, therefore we will build the budget based on where we are.

**Are we going to operate on a tight budget because of the lost tax revenue over these last few months?**



We consistently work on tight budgets. Although we do not yet know what the full impact of COVID-19 will be with regard to tax revenue, we will adapt as necessary in the hope of receiving some state and federal financial assistance.

**Nashville has a website that lets people know where the hotspots are, will Clarksville also offer the same information?**

Nashville implemented that website when the city had 800 confirmed cases of COVID-19. We do not have enough cases to designate hot spots and hope that we do not get to that point.

**Do you anticipate a delay in the MPEC and do you think it is a smart decision to move forward with it considering how many people may not have jobs to go back to after this?**

It has already been delayed to some degree. The groundbreaking and demolition of existing buildings have been delayed. We anticipated selling the bonds to fund the project, in late March and that has also been delayed. We will continue to monitor the economic conditions of the bond market and the overall economy before we proceed with the sale of the bonds. Some design work is continuing.

**What is the recommendation for getting together with very small groups, such as one couple inviting another couple over for dinner; or one family inviting a single person or another family over for dinner?**

We do not recommend get togethers with those outside of your household of any size. Even a relative or friend might be a carrier even though they show no signs or outward symptoms of the virus. This is per CDC guidelines.

**Do you plan on ordering that all ESSENTIAL debts (i.e Rent, Mortgage, Water, and Electric) be halted?**

This is not something that State or local government can do. We do encourage those who need assistance to contact United Way of the Greater Clarksville Region at (931) 647-4291 for info on the resources that are available to help with rent and utilities.

**I've heard rumors of a curfew being implemented, is there any truth behind this rumor?**

No new curfews are planned. The only existing curfew, which has been in effect for many years, applies only to minors.

**I would like to know all the places that been shut down stores, library's, etc. were they able to sanitize their business before closure.**

We would expect most businesses that have closed would clean prior to re-opening.

**Based on the data gathered at all levels, is there reason to believe the children will not return to school Is it reasonable to expect TN and CMCSS specifically, to follow that trend?**

Gov. Lee recommended April 15 that schools close for the rest of the 2019-20 school year, and CMCSS announced later April 15 that it had decided to close for the remainder of the school year.

**Can parents be cited if they allow their children to play with multiple other families' children in their neighborhood at the same time? If so, what if the total number of children together is less than 10?**

That is not something that is covered by law enforcement, however, the orders from the County and City request that there be less than 10 people in the same location and that social distancing is taking place.

**My husband and I are waiting on our new house to close so we can move. Is there any restrictions that might stop us from being able to move?**

There are no restrictions in the Emergency or Executive orders that would prevent you and your husband from moving.

**Friday's (April 10) number is 84 cases. Of those 84 cases how many are deceased, active and are now considered well?**

To keep up with that information, which may change daily, visit <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>.

**Will food vendors that go neighborhood to neighborhood – like an ice cream truck -- be prevented from operating?**

They are not prevented from operating. However, we would urge them and their customers to observe social distancing and CDC guidelines with regard to sanitizing their methods and equipment.