



June 17, 2020

Good Morning,

COVID-19 has impacted our lives in many ways, and I am hopeful we will benefit from this challenge. Our world and nation are also dealing with discrimination in all forms. I know we will be a better nation moving forward once we understand we were all created equal and equal treatment is expected and practiced for all. We can say we are living in interesting times for sure and I hope our society is starting to understand we are stronger together.

We have been fortunate so far. We have not yet had a COVID-19 case in Topsail Beach; however, the odds are we will. The number of positive cases and hospitalizations due to COVID-19 are not tracking in a positive direction for North Carolina. The curve we started to flatten has begun to grow again. This is concerning as we determine how our state will move to the next phase. The steps we all take will determine how we move forward. History tells how during the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918 and Asian Flu Pandemic of 1957; it took almost 2 years before life started to return to what many considered normal.

The Governor spoke about his concern during a press conference Monday and indicated he may consider face coverings as mandatory, if the numbers continue to trend upward. Several North Carolina cities are also considering requiring face coverings. There are 9 counties in North Carolina considered as "HOT SPOT" counties. Travel to these hot spot counties and not practicing the 3 W's (wear, wait & wash) is a major concern. The results are being seen in western Pender County now with the increases in COVID-19 cases. Pender County now has 146 COVID-19 cases. Sixty-eight of those are in the 18 to 49 age range and forty-six are in the 50 to 64 age range. Only sixteen positive cases are in ages 65+ years. The Governor has indicated he will be making a decision on the next phase early next week.

I am asking all Topsail Beach citizens, property owners, visitors, employees, and businesses to practice social distancing and wear a face covering when social distancing is not possible. Being in an enclosed space with others and not practicing social distancing is showing a high risk for transmission of COVID-19. Please follow CDC & NCDHHS guidelines and consider taking the "Count on Me NC" training (<https://countonmenc.org/>) to help educate businesses and individuals on best practices to reduce infection from COVID -19.

We are in this together and we all have a moral and ethical obligation to do our part to protect the people we come in contact with daily.

Thank you and stay safe.

Regards, Steve Smith, Mayor
Town of Topsail Beach