



Hi all my friends and neighbors in Clarkdale. As Clarkdale’s Mayor, I am constantly aware of Covid-19’s impact on our lives. Lately, I have become more concerned than ever about the virus and how it will affect Clarkdale.

The chart above shows the new COVID-19 cases in Arizona since March 4<sup>th</sup>. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, Arizona’s “Stay at Home” order expired, and on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 12 days later, the new cases of the virus started sharply upward. Until that day, new cases hovered around 300-500 per day. Today, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Arizona hit a new record high number of new cases, with 3857 after 3 weeks of constant increases.

Clarkdale had been very lucky until last week, when on Wednesday, we had 3 cases in our town. On Thursday, the number grew to 5, on Friday there were 8, 11 on Saturday and by today, Monday, there were 15. While the number of known cases is small compared to larger communities, the trajectory is sharply upward. Cases have tripled in just 6 days.

To give this a little perspective, the Navajo Nation now has 7469 cases, and 363 deaths from COVID-19. Why is this important to us in Clarkdale? Because the outbreak on the Navajo Nation was brought there by a single individual. One man, who had attended an indoor basketball tournament in Tucson came home to the Nation and attended a church social, where he spread the disease to parishioners. They went home and spread it to their families, who went out and spread it to thousands of others. In just a few weeks the Nation was one of America’s hot spots.

Most of us know that the Navajo Reservation is a very sparsely populated, rural area, not your typical metropolitan hot spot. Clarkdale is fairly sparse, too, and very rural, not your typical metropolitan hot spot. We have 15 cases. I believe that we can still limit the number of cases in our town, but we must take COVID-19 seriously. If you look at the Arizona chart, above, you can see that the increase in cases has risen exponentially. For instance, the “Rt” of this virus is about 2.5, meaning that the average carrier

gives the disease to 2.5 others. If nothing is done to stop the spread, after just 10 generations of spread, or about 30 days, there could be over 28,000 cases. But we can slow this, and possibly even stop the increase (“flatten the curve”).

How can we flatten the Clarkdale curve? We can do a lot! Each intervention lowers the “Rt”, and when it gets to 1 or below, the curve flattens out, and there is no increase in new cases. We know that the most contagious situation is indoors, in crowds, in places where people are speaking loudly. Since the vast majority of spread is from person to person, and since that spread is greater the closer you are to others, the least contagious circumstance is away from other people. If you are outside with plenty of separation between you and anyone else, contagion is very, very low – as much as 1/30 that of being indoors with others. Other things that lower the spread of the virus include wearing face masks, hand washing, not touching your face, and use of hand sanitizer. Face masks can decrease the transmission of COVID-19 tremendously, and masks are mandatory in most public settings in Clarkdale. Recent analysis shows that masks help protect both the wearer and others.

So, I am asking every Clarkdalian to follow these practices:

1. Stay home. Only go to indoor places and events when you absolutely must. Avoid large gatherings as much as you can.
2. When you go out, wear a mask!
3. Use hand sanitizers or wash your hands as soon as you get out of public situations and as often as possible.
4. Don't touch your face until you have done #3.
5. When you're outside, wear your mask whenever you can't stay 10 feet from others.
6. Be considerate of your neighbors and coworkers. Wear a mask whenever you are near other people.

With your help and consideration, we can keep the number of cases to a minimum, and we can all get back to more normal lives faster! Please be safe!

Doug Von Gausig, Mayor