

## Keri O'Brien

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**From:** Cheri Smith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 10:02 AM  
**To:** Keri O'Brien  
**Subject:** FW: Respectfully submitting a print copy of my 5 minute statement for tonight's meeting

Mayor, Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen:

When COVID-19 first struck the citizens of our small islands, we had limited personal protective equipment for healthcare workers, near nonexistent testing for this virus, limited understanding of needed resources and were experiencing an influenza outbreak which gave a false sense of security to many that they may of already had this new, pandemic illness.

Healthcare in New York City was facing a catastrophic siege by this new virus. Local healthcare knew we had no where near the resources or the priority like that supporting of the Great City. We saw small clusters of illness develop and emotionally lost 3 of neighbors.

It was not the mega-bioscience research houses of our planet that crushed the life threatening curve of affliction. It was our citizens. They put their financial futures at risk in extreme social distancing. They were their own heroes saving lives by starving the virus for new victims. They were our healthcare's heroes.

The time their sacrifices gave us, became time to equip. Time to face this disease in small numbers of afflicted, not a flood. Time to train and drill.

Thanks to that sacrifice our hospitals report having ample personal protective equipment for staffs. Noninvasive and invasive ventilatory support has been augmented. Our staffs have training and experience with COVID-19 infected patients.

We now have testing. Antibody and direct virus testing. Testing that shows great vulnerability in our people.

The health department is virus contact tracing with good result as demonstrated by our containment of Initial local spread.

Treatments are very poor still. So we keep ourselves healthy and work to guard our most vulnerable populations. One such group was breached. We saw how even trained medical personnel can asymptotically bring this affliction into one of our nursing facilities. The impact there still not fully felt.

Our citizens can only make this sacrifice so long. A road block which separated us from more aggressive virus spread has served us well but could not last forever. Many Of us have become so fatigued, all but abandoning the tools that protected us until now.

To go forward we cannot depend on abstract concepts such as herd immunity or future treatments. Data so far suggests these may fail us.

Healthcare will stand it's watch with these tools which time let us acquire. Social distancing is being relaxed in phases and must continue to be embraced. Washing, masking and keeping good distances adjusted to local virus spread continues to be our best weapon. Monitoring through testing and contact tracing with isolation as required be our guide to these adjustments in relaxing our interventions. Healthcare resources must not be overwhelmed or lives will be taken by limits as well as disease.

Our citizens could only be expected to make the extreme sacrifice so long. The road block which separated us from more aggressive virus spread has served us well, but could not last forever. Leadership has and continues to make very difficult decisions. Some citizens have become so emotionally fatigued, all but abandoning the tools that protected us until now. Visitors seeking fun and recreation are only as likely to practice good sanitary behaviors as the locals with whom they interact. It will be all of you that guide our visitors. Healthcare calls on all of you again to embrace the phased relaxation of social distancing while frequently washing your hands, wearing the mask in tight quarters and politely reminding the pleasure seeker to keep up their guard.

So we again call to our community to starve this virus's spread. Rekindle your resolve to open smart in monitored phases. Rekindle our economy with eyes open and your personal citizenship in declaration of one human family.

Sent from my iPad