

March 26, 2020 "Kick the Panic"
4:00 PM
Big Horn County
COVID-19 Update/Response

For Immediate Release

I am getting many alarmed questions, texts and phone calls. I know we have uncertainty. It is a time of huge modifications to our lifestyles and the threat of death and disease, whether real or perceived is an ominous cloud that hangs over all of us. As I presented today on updates in Heart Failure at the hospital, I was asked to give a status report on COVID-19. Most of my questions were due to COVID-19. It dominates our thinking. Almost a moment doesn't go by when even routine activities, such as coming in the door from work have been modified to include shedding outer layer of clothing and putting it in the wash and then washing hands thoroughly before touching any surfaces, brings the reality of the disease to the forefront of our minds.

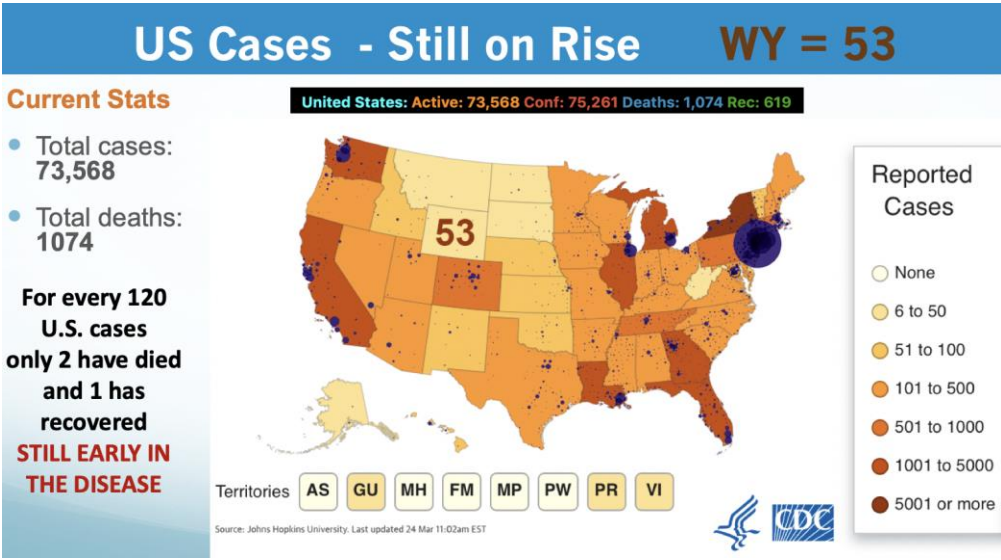
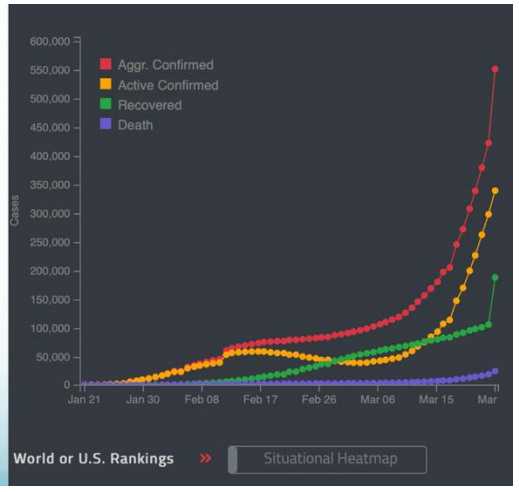
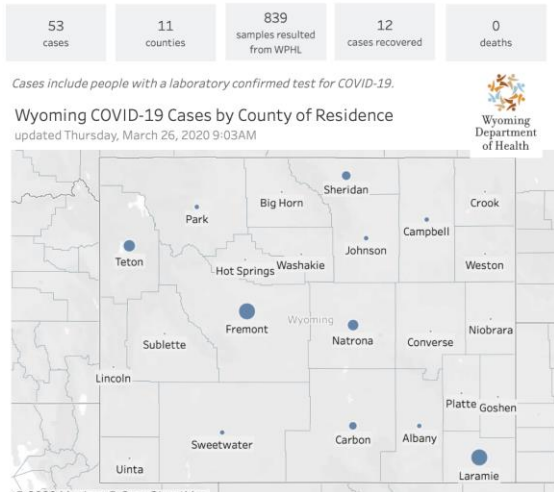
While these changes to our routine are important to protect our families, they serve as a constant reminder that we are at war with an unseen enemy. I don't think that America has seen the threat of death so real since the days of nuclear bomb shelters and polio. And while treaties and vaccines have mostly eliminated those threats from our minds, we have no vaccine in sight and a treaty with this enemy is impossible.

So, what do we do? We have to find hope in the circumstances we are in. We have to see that the changes we put in place and make habits will keep our families healthier even beyond COVID. The technology we use for education, will likely revolutionize learning. Telemedicine will redesign our health system to bring primary care providers and specialists to our homes and work places at the touch of a button. The systems that are changed by necessity now, will help us to move beyond isolation and help us become more interdependent and connected to our leaders, congregations, family and friends. Our youth and young adults that have been struggling in our recent world situation will rise to the challenge and use technology to design new business and deliver services in ways that will make our lives far more productive and useful.

I will once again update you on the status of COVID-19, but I want to focus on the gains we have made.

Yes, we have 53 cases in Wyoming, that's up 33% in ~24 hours, HOWEVER, we also have 12 people who have fully recovered and are not quarantined or hospitalized anymore. Seven are hospitalized and the rest are still restricted to home. NO DEATHS.

This is a good sign. But I am sure we still have cases out there that have not yet been tested. And for the first time globally, we see a spike in recoveries that is matching the pace of the total cases.



I have hope! Recent data suggests that we were more prepared as a country for this than others. That may be reflected in the lower death rate in the U.S. than globally. And in Wyoming we may have it milder, as we have had ZERO deaths and 12 of our 53 have recovered. We are still encouraged by the decrease in cases in Washington state after distancing and staying at home measures that were put in place.

That being said let us remember that COVID-19 isn't the only thing that can take our loved ones from us. We have suffered a terrible tragedy today in a loss of one of our county's citizens from trauma. Although I don't know the details, any death is a loss, as it rather permanently severs our connection with that person.

As we grieve for him and with his family, let us try to be sensitive to people that are suffering in our communities. Acknowledge the subtle cries for help. Make sure that as we physically distance, we try even harder to maintain our social connections, a short phone call or facetime, a Google hangout or Zoom, or even a simple card left on the door or in the mail. We all need to be emotionally strong so we can support those who need us.

So, as we talk to each other, and ourselves, I would hope we could use calming language. Check our fears, so that we can help with others. Here are some examples of some responses we can use when people are panicked:

These are phrases to help “Kick the Panic!”

When coping needs a boost, or emotions are running high

When they say	What you can say
I’m scared.	This is such a tough situation. <i>I think anyone would be scared.</i> Could you share more with me?
I need some hope.	Tell me about the things you are hoping for? <i>I want to understand more.</i>
When am I going to be able to go back outside/to work/to school again?	It seems that you are struggling with the uncertainty of these changes. <i>I know it would be easier if there was an end in sight.</i> What can you see about being home that is positive or gives you time to do something else?
The people in charge are incompetent!	I can see why you are not happy with things. <i>I am willing to do what is in my power to improve things for you.</i> What could I do that would help?
It sounds they are rationing.	What we are doing is trying to spread out our resources in the best way possible. <i>This is a time where I wish we had more for every single person in this nation.</i>

Grieving

When you’ve lost someone

When you’re thinking	What you can do
I should have been able to save that person. I wish I would have called them.	Notice: <i>am I grading myself?</i> Could I step back and just feel? Maybe it’s sadness, or frustration, or just fatigue. Those feelings are normal. And these times are distinctly abnormal.
	When you’ve lost hope
I cannot believe we don’t have the right equipment / adequate testing or masks/how are we going to survive this?	Notice: <i>am I catastrophizing?</i> Is all this analyzing really about something else? Like how sad this is, how powerless I feel, how puny our efforts look? Under these conditions, such thoughts are to be expected. But we don’t have to let them suck us under. Can we notice them, and feel them, maybe share them? And then ask ourselves: <i>can I step into a less reactive, more balanced place even as I move into the next thing?</i>

Do the things we have been talking about:
“DO THE FIVE TO STAY ALIVE”

Stay Home. Stay Distant. Stay Safe!
Counter COVID with Clean Counters!
Swerve the Curve!
Kick the Panic!

If you need help finding a health care provider or additional information on COVID **call 211.**



**DO THE FIVE
STAY ALIVE**

Help stop coronavirus

- 1 **HANDS** Wash them often
- 2 **ELBOW** Cough into it
- 3 **FACE** Don't touch it
- 4 **SPACE** Keep safe distance
- 5 **HOME** Stay if you can

Respectfully,

David Weston, Fairbanks, MD, FAAFP

Big Horn County Health Officer

Medical Commissioner, State Emergency Response Commission,

Wyoming Office of Homeland Security

Medical Director, Wyoming State Parks EMS

Chairman Wyoming EMS for Children

Medical Director, Shell Volunteer Fire Department & EMS

Medical Director, Big Horn County Search & Rescue

Medical Director, Antelope Butte Mountain Recreation Area & Ski Patrol



For Sources of Information on COVID-19:

1. Big Horn County Public Health Website:
<https://www.bighorncountywy.gov>
<https://www.bighorncountywy.gov/departments/public-health>
2. Park County Public Health Coronavirus Information Line: 754-1870 or 527-1870 (**Updated regularly**). **Big Horn County may use this.**
3. Up to date announcements from Wyoming Department of Health as they are released Wyoming Department of Health
Website: <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus>.
4. CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>