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COVID-19: It Takes a Village
By Dr. Michele Dikkers, Chair of Clayton County Board of Health

It Takes a Village. I remember when I first heard this title/sentiment, I didn’t quite know that I agreed. But as I have grown older, I have found it to be truer and more important than I had realized.

Growing up, your parents could drop you at the neighbors and know you would be taken care of if they had to run an errand or had an emergency, night or day. If someone’s home or barn burned down, everyone showed up with food and hands to clean up and rebuild. Cows even got walked down the road and milked by the neighbor if the milking parlor was lost. When a family member becomes ill or dies, food gets delivered, lawn gets mowed, snow gets shoveled, just because it is the right thing to do.

COVID-19 has brought it out in all of us as well. Masks are being made and donated. Food banks are getting filled and delivered to those in need. Companies are transitioning from making automobiles to respirators and masks. Nurses and doctors are traveling from their respective homes to areas of need, such as New York and LA to help, jumping in without hesitation.

Everyone made changes. We all stopped in mid stride. Plans changed suddenly, everyone holding their breath until things could be sorted out, until the ambush by COVID-19 could be assessed and a plan could be made. Now we wait with anxiety to move on. We have made plans and it seems to have worked for us in Iowa. Our numbers have been stable. We have not seen a peak that has been unmanageable. We seem to have flattened the curve.

But our work is not done. We need to continue to slow the spread of COVID-19, with a goal of cancelling COVID-19. The governor and her team continue to assess the situation and give guidance for opening up the state. We know that along with the need to keep everyone physically safe, we must also keep everyone emotionally and economically safe. We can’t have one without the other.

So here we are, in the pickle of trying to do both. While those at most risk are in the older population, it is the younger population that is more frequently infected.

If you are sick, with any ailment, mentally or physically, call your provider and seek an appointment and guidance.

The best way to open the economy is to do it safely. Make stores and restaurants a safe place for all. By wearing a mask when you shop, you are letting everyone know that you care about their safety and well-being. You care enough to help protect them. By wearing a mask when you work, you are letting others know you want your place of business to be a safe place for everyone to be. It is a simple act of kindness and respect. Wear a mask.

We are in this together.

It takes a village.