

VMG COVID-19 UPDATE

Friday, May 1,
2020
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Issue

Happy May Day! In some countries, May Day is celebrated by dances, parties, cakes etc. at large social gatherings to welcome spring. Well, we can't do the large social gatherings, but please enjoy the warmer weather.

National, State, and Regional

There are more news reports today on many companies and countries involved in working on a vaccine. Some are skipping animal studies and going to human trials. Despite this, we are months and maybe years away from having a safe and effective and widely available vaccine. So, again, physical (social) distancing is the main tool we have to prevent spread of the virus.

There will continue to be tension between wanting to follow public health advice about slowing the virus and keeping safe on the one hand and "opening up" the economy (travel, restaurants, movies, visiting, shopping, etc.) on the other. We're going to have to live with this tension for many months. *By the way, this is why Harry Truman once said he wanted a one-armed economic advisor. His economic advisors were always saying "on the one hand....and on the other hand..."*

We all want clear direction and certainty. But we have little certainty with the virus now other than it is highly contagious and, in some cases, it can be deadly. So balancing this tension, we think continuing physical (social) distancing makes sense. This will be "the VMG way" until we feel that safety can be managed differently.

There was a great article in the *Boston Globe* this morning about why Massachusetts seems to be staying at a plateau in new cases and deaths. When the pandemic "hit" our state about 8 weeks ago, there was talk about a rapid increase in cases, a peak, and then a decline. Instead we have had the rapid increase and now we may be in a period of staying at peak with a slow decline. The writer explained this as a car with the accelerator stuck to the floor. It speeds off and the first step is to get it unstuck. We seem to have reached that point. Now we have to find a way to tap the brakes. The only tool for that for now is, you guessed it.

At VMG

I think that many of us are "getting used to" working in this new way, wearing masks in the health centers and when out and about with other people. It may provide some sense of control and calm.

But there is another type of "being mindful" we need to observe. Let's remember that we may find ourselves inadvertently disrupting physical distancing or doing things "the old way." So let's be certain that we realize that things we used to do automatically may carry some risks and keep finding new ways. This is particularly true about deciding to bring folks into the health centers. But it's also true about

small gatherings. The question to ask, is it worth the risk? Let's reduce the chance for inadvertent risk. We'll be working on that.

Next week we will begin piloting some pediatric wellness visits. We'll be monitoring how it works and after a debriefing, make whatever work flow changes are necessary to do this safely and scale up as necessary.

Amy Rice received 7 infrared thermometers. We will be making sure they work well and then figuring out where to deploy them for screening.

We've received 250 additional face shields donated from Oxbow Design (300 total from Oxbow Design). Distribution to clinical staff will take place next week so everyone will have their own face shield. Proper care and cleaning instructions will be provided.

Greg Folta reported that we are seeing changes in telehealth reimbursements. This is good news. We are seeing some payers reimbursing at the same rates for phone visits as for VV. These changes will be retroactive to March 1st. There is also good news with PT Dept. billing changes.

All of this change can certainly be very tiring. So we have a weekend coming up. Please enjoy the weather, go out for walks, "see people" at a distance or by phone, Face Time or Zoom, talk with family and friends, etc. Be socially closening while physical distancing. One of the morning news anchors was talking about her daughters missing their grandparents. So they set up a Yahtzee game over social media with the grandkids and grandparents. Maybe a tournament?

Oh, and hey, hey, hey, remember: wash your hands (a lot), don't touch your face, maintain social-physical distancing (it works), and wear a mask, stay home if you're sick/leave work if you're feeling sick.

Be well,

Joel

Be patient; be mindful

P.S. Some ideas and thoughts:

Day 9 quarantine...😂😂😂😂

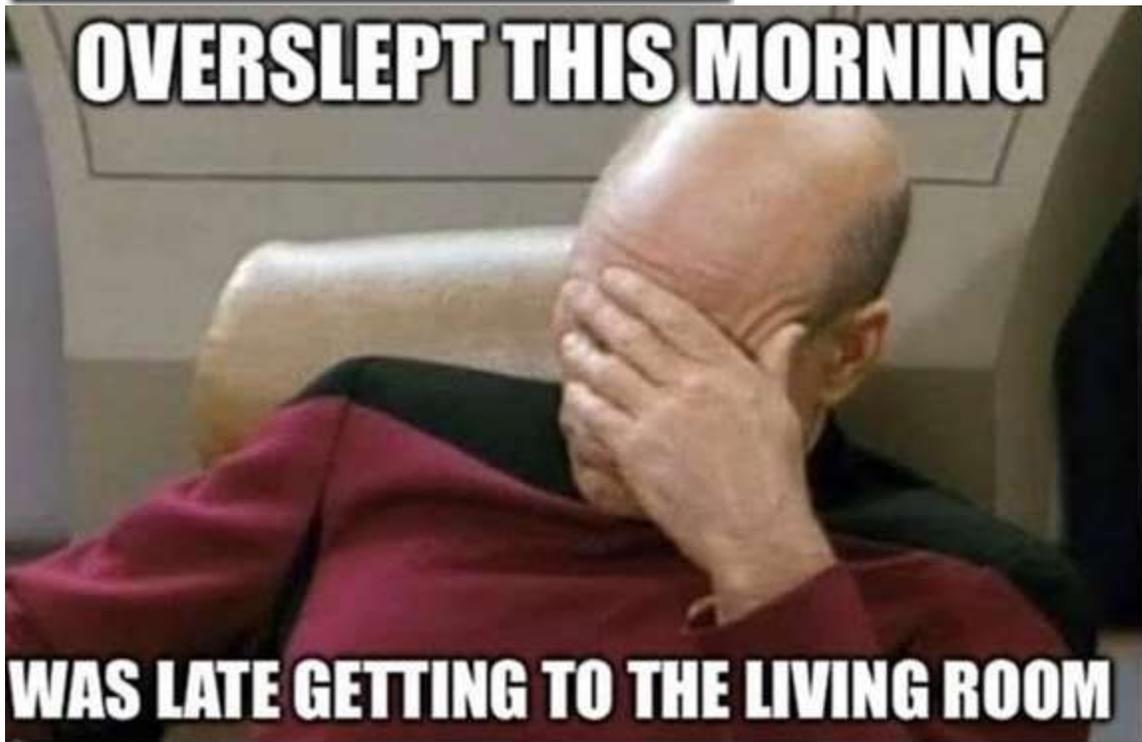


QUARANTINE DAY 20:
TODAY, I MELTED AN
ICE CUBE WITH MY
MIND JUST BY STARING
AT IT. IT TOOK A LOT
LONGER THAN I
THOUGHT IT WOULD.

**HOME SCHOOLING
UPDATE:
MY CHILD JUST SAID
I HOPE I DON'T
HAVE THE SAME
TEACHER NEXT YEAR**

OVERSLEPT THIS MORNING

WAS LATE GETTING TO THE LIVING ROOM





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