

November 23, 2020

Fellow Citizens,

We are writing with concern to ask for each and every one of your assistance during this critical stage in our community's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. We are now five weeks into an exponential rise in local COVID-positive cases—by far the worst rise since March--which shows no sign of slowing down. The impacts are taking a toll on all of us. Our community is increasingly stressed, and some of us have lost friends and family members...with more certainly to follow. Now is the time we must join together as a community with a united mission to reverse the course and take back our schools, our businesses, our churches, and our base from the effects of this pandemic. This is our opportunity as a community to lead, showcase our unity and set the model for the State.

The impacts of individual choices on the community are dramatic. Because of the high rates of Coronavirus transmission and the virus's continued uncontrolled spread, our children remain unable to attend in-person classes—something that will negatively impact their development for years to come. Despite our districts' best efforts, high rates of transmission in the region mean schools must continue virtual-only instruction for the foreseeable future. Our kids will continue suffering unless we commit to working together.

Likewise, our businesses remain limited to fractions of their full capacity, and only for those permitted to continue operating. The economic impacts on nearly every business in our community mean permanent closures and fewer jobs—again, effects that will hurt Clovis and Portales for years to come. Our Airmen working at Cannon AFB are increasingly being quarantined due to exposure to COVID-positive co-workers, friends, and family members. This makes doing the jobs the nation depends on them to do that much more difficult. The impacts of the pandemic on the base are real, and it threatens the security of the nation. And all of us are impacted by the effects of full hospitals and intensive care units. It is now much more difficult to get non-COVID related care. ER trips take much longer, and patients are having to be transferred out of the local hospitals and into ones hours away, if beds are even available. Routine procedures are postponed. Our medical professionals are stressed and working overtime to try to handle the added needs of our community.

It doesn't have to be this way. Collectively, we have the ability to stop the spread of COVID-19. We can get our schools, our businesses, and our base back to full operating capacities. But until a vaccine is widely available, we have to make individual choices to stop doing those things that contribute to the virus's spread. We must acknowledge this pandemic is real, and that the virus doesn't care about our political affiliations. We have to forego traditional large group gatherings for now. We need to keep our distance from those we don't cohabitate with. We need to limit our travel. And we need to wear face coverings when we're unable to stay six feet apart from one another. Implementing these COVID-19 safe practices within our daily tasks will change the course that we are in and are heading towards.

It's time to work together to protect our families and our community. With your help and commitment, we can decrease the strain and burden on our medical professionals, our educators, our businesses, and our military. Let's get ourselves back "into the green" by 2021. The actions we—as individuals—take today are the only thing that can stop the spread of the virus tomorrow.

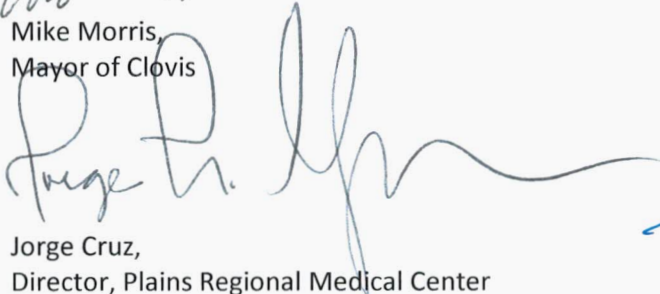
Thank you and stay safe,



Mike Morris,  
Mayor of Clovis



Ron Jackson,  
Mayor of Portales



Jorge Cruz,  
Director, Plains Regional Medical Center



Kaye Green,  
Director, Roosevelt General Hospital



Renee Russ,  
Superintendent, Clovis Municipal Schools



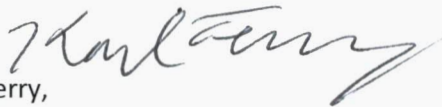
Colonel Robert A. Masaitis,  
Commander, 27 Special Operations Wing



Greg Southard,  
President, Clovis Chamber of Commerce



Ernie Kos  
Executive Director, Clovis/Curry Chamber of  
Commerce



Karl Terry,  
Executive Director, Roosevelt Chamber of  
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Pastor Dean Williamson,  
Director, Clovis Ministerial Alliance



Dr. Patrice Caldwell,  
President, Eastern New Mexico University



Dr. Charles Nwankwo,  
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David Robinson,  
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Jody Bailey,  
President, Portales Military Affairs Committee