

**COVID-19:**  
**INSIGHT INTO THE EFFORTS  
UNDERWAY BY GREATER  
AKRON'S HEALTH CARE  
LEADERSHIP**

**Q&A From the Meeting**

**GENERAL UPDATES**

**HOSPITAL RESPONSE**

**BUSINESS SUPPORT**



**GREATER AKRON CHAMBER**

# GENERAL UPDATES

**Q: Can we get a snapshot of what Summit County is seeing right now?**

**A: Donna Skoda, Summit County Health Commissioner**

Locally we have added two orders in addition to the orders from the State. One that will allow governmental entities to meet remotely, as well as, be able to vote electronically. The second issue is around social distancing in businesses. We were getting a ton of reports that businesses that were open were allowing large groups to congregate in the stores. We have issued an order that mandates they do cleaning, social distancing, and que customers into the store to prevent overcrowding.

Community spread is happening. We have had our second patient in a long term care facility test positive, which is extremely concerning.

We have to be in this for the long haul. I know it is inconvenient and economically devastating, but we have to pull together and think very differently about how we live day in and day out.

## **Mayor Dan Horrigan**

"There has been an unprecedented level of cooperation in trying to address this and I appreciate the conversations and the leadership each and every day. Obviously, we are following the strict guidelines put forward by Dr. Acton and Governor DeWine. We separated about 600 people last week, trying to practice social distancing, all of us are working from home if we can. We are going to keep the central city services going, keeping water on and keeping as many people employed as possible. We have a daily call with the Governor, if there anything we can push on that call let us know, because the Governor has been fairly amenable to doing things that we want and that we need."

# HOSPITAL RESPONSE

**Q: What is the capacity of your ICU beds, what are you expecting, and how are you planning to deal with extended volume?**

**A: Dr. Cliff Deveny, President & CEO, Summa Health**

Under Grace Walkuchiks leadership, she is the current head of the Akron Regional Hospital Association, we are keeping an inventory of all the ICU beds, all the ventilators, and what is available. As many of you know we are usually pretty busy with regular health care but have been able to reduce that number across the board.

**A: Dr. Brian Harte, President, Cleveland Clinic Akron General**

Specifically, when COVID-19 patients do poorly, they do so from a breathing standpoint, so those patients need to be in a critical care setting. So, we have inventoried not only our current inventory but what existing hospital beds we can re-purpose to become ICU beds. You can't do that for all of them, the space must be big enough, you have to have monitoring and ventilators, and of course you need other things that ICU care requires. We have ramped up that capability at Akron by almost double and by the end of the week we will be able to hold more critical care patients.

**Q: Are we seeing PPE distribution from the strategic national stock pile to our region at this point?**

**A: Donna Skoda, Summit County Health Commissioner**

We received notice last night that the stock pile was coming, we have people down at our drop site today that will be going through it, hopefully they can get it through it and get it out today.

**Q: What is your current situation around PPE? What does your supply look like and are there ways employers can help with that?**

**A: Tom Smoot, Emergency Management Agency Director, Summit County Public Health**

PPE is probably one of the most critical needs right now, we are seeing a worldwide shortage for first responders and hospitals. One initiative that we have, and that anyone can help us with, is we are reaching out to physicians, dentist offices, veterinarians, construction companies, those that may have personal protective equipment. We are asking them to donate these supplies to our local first responders and health care workers. We are looking for M95 masks, medical grade nitrile gloves, surgical masks, face shields, medical gowns, sterile swabs, thermometers, things that are really essential to carrying out our work. To donate for Summit County, you will call the Summit County Public Health COVID-19 line at 330-926-5795 and you will be directed to the drop off location.

**A: Grace Wakulchik, President & CEO, Akron Children's Hospital**

We have a great team working on PPE standards so that as people go from hospital to hospital, whether they are practitioners, patients or nursing staff, they will see the same standard use of PPE based on the CDC guidelines. The confusing part is that changes are being made frequently and we have a limited supply. So, we are looking at providing the same kind of direction as to what kind of mask should be used when, for what kind of employee, for what kind of patient, and we are trying to standardize that across the hospital systems. As you can imagine trying to communicate that from our small group down to the front lines when things are changing every day, gets a little confusing, but we are really working hard at it.

**Dr. Cliff Deveny, President & CEO, Summa Health**

“First what I would like to put out is we are pretty lucky here in our community that all the different health systems, the government officials, and the Chamber have been communicating early on, cooperating, and really working together to come up with standard ways to address how we are doing things.”

**Q: Are you finding that there is a workforce shortage among medical systems?**

**A: Dr. Brian Harte, President, Cleveland Clinic Akron General**

Because we have wound down so much of our out-patient, operative, and procedural operations, we have created an internal labor pool so we can deploy people into different rolls. We have been able to re-purpose people into new rolls that did not exist before like “standing guard” at each of the entrances and taking temperatures before people come in. We are not concerned at this time, yet, about a labor shortage. Of course, getting back to the PPE issue, a substantial concern is that if we can’t keep our caregivers safe in this environment, then a whole lot of unpleasant things are going to happen, only one of which is a medical labor shortage.

**Q: What is it that you’re doing to support childcare for your workers and are there ways that we can be helpful in that regard?**

**A: Dr. Brian Harte, President, Cleveland Clinic Akron General**

We are setting up childcare at our health and wellness centers, small groups with sign-ups. We have also seen a lot of partnerships among our employees, switching off shifts watching each other’s children. It has been very gratifying that both through the hospital and through social relationships people have found ways to get their kids taken care of in a safe environment.

**A: Dr. Cliff Deveny, President & CEO, Summa Health**

Childcare workers can apply at the local YMCA/YWCA, they have 4 local pandemic childcare centers, and they are looking at expanding that capacity. Some of our workers have been able to use that but also, we should be looking to promote that if others are looking for childcare.

# BUSINESS SUPPORT

**Q: Can employers require temperature screening/checks for their employees when they come into work, how do people manage this process in their businesses? And then there is also shortages of thermometer's, how do businesses combat that?**

**A: Donna Skoda, Summit County Health Commissioner**

Employers do have the ability to require a temperature check at the entrance of work. There is a shortage of thermometers, we have been trying to get some out to businesses and we are in the process of looking into purchasing some more. If you do not have a thermometer, we are recommending that you request your employees to do self-monitoring at home and report that temperature to you. We know that is open for abuse, but if a business doesn't have the ability to do it themselves, they must rely on their employees to handle it.

**A: Grace Wakulchik, President & CEO, Akron Children's Hospital**

Another thing that businesses can do is offer a paid sick time policy so that employees who are sick know that they will still be paid to stay home and won't come into work just because they need the money.

**A: Dr. Robert Kent, President & CEO, Western Reserve Hospital**

We know that is really hard on businesses financially, but you have to look at the big picture. If you have an employee come in with an illness and they infect more employees, you are worse off.

Q: A small business owner that is a sole proprietor with no employees and a place of business outside of their home, is wondering if they are allowed to go to that office to continue their operations if they are the only one there?

A: Donna Skoda, Summit County Health Commissioner

If they are not letting people in there with them, then yes, that is fine.

Q: An individual on the front lines who is a health aid was exhibiting symptoms, are there ways to expedite testing or is it just typical advice of talk to your doctor and have them guide you?

A: Dr. Robert Kent, President & CEO, Western Reserve Hospital

Right now, with our current testing situation, we are only testing high-risk patients. That may change in a week or so, but that is the current situation in this market.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

United Way Fund