

Jerome Delvin, *District 1*
Shon Small, *District 2*
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Jerrod MacPherson
County Administrator
Matt Rasmussen
Deputy County Administrator

Board of County Commissioners

June 17, 2020

Statement from Benton County Board of Commissioners Regarding Current Status of COVID-19 in our Community

To our community:

We understand the community's frustration and confusion about where we're at in the COVID-19 Reopening Plan. We want to stress that this is not intended to be a political issue – it's not about Republicans or Democrats. It's about keeping our community safe and healthy, and moving the right direction. Right now, that means we need everyone to work together to get us on a path to recovery.

We understand that people don't like wearing masks, none of us do – they are uncomfortable. But making that sacrifice is going to help our community move forward to Phase 2 and beyond. Research has shown that wearing masks, social distancing, staying home when you can, and maintaining good hygiene means that the rate of infections goes down.

Following recommendations also means that our local businesses will get to open sooner. We all know someone who has been financially impacted by this crisis. It's up to us as a community to do our part to move this process along as quickly as possible so that more local businesses don't have to shut their doors. Continue to support your local businesses however you can but do so in a way that's safe.

"I have been wearing masks for about a month in public places. My 16-year-old niece with stage four cancer doesn't need any more complications. I do it for the safety for her and others and I know folks have similar stories. Together we can reduce the spread of the virus and expedite our counties to the next phase to open the local business, which are so needed to get the work force going again," said Commissioner Small.

The State Department of Health has told the media that Benton and Franklin Counties' applications are "on pause." County officials were not notified of this decision, and neither were Health District officials. We are still trying to figure out what exactly that means for our communities. As soon as we know more, we will be putting out a media release as well as updating our website and social media channels.

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep our community safe and reopening our County.

Sincerely,

Benton County Board of Commissioners