

**From:** [Ty Wessell](#)  
**To:** [Laurel Evans](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Possible Great Barrington Declaration discussion  
**Date:** Friday, February 5, 2021 10:08:50 AM

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Public comment please. Thanks.  
Ty

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Daniel Toole <drtoole@gmail.com>  
**Date:** February 2, 2021 at 12:55:09 PM EST  
**To:** Rick Robbins <rrobbs@leelanau.gov>, Debra Rushton <drushton@leelanau.gov>, Will Bunek <wbunek@leelanau.gov>, Ty Wessell <twessell@leelanau.gov>, psoutas-little@leelanau.gov, Gwenne Allgaier <gallgaier@leelanau.gov>, Melinda Lautner <mlautner@leelanau.gov>  
**Cc:** Beth Verhey <bethlverhey@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** **Possible Great Barrington Declaration discussion**

Dear Leelanau County Commissioners -

I've seen in the Enterprise that you will discuss a possible local alignment with the approach to Covid-19 outlined in the Great Barrington Declaration. Please do not move forward in that direction.

I am a full time Leelanau resident since July having come here for years in summer and then decided to retire to this wonderful part of the world. I worked for 30 years for UNICEF, leading programs around the world, as Regional Director in Asia and also as Global Director of Emergencies -- coordinating global responses to floods, earthquakes, epidemics, tsunamis, wars etc. I have seen first hand what happens when epidemics get out of hand and thousands die - I know personally the value of protective public health and government policies.

When this declaration was initially penned in October last year, it caused quite a set of conversations. It essentially called for the adaption of the herd immunity theory: let as many persons as possible at lower risk of the consequences get infected, to bring about herd immunity in the entire population. There is no mention of masks, physical distancing, hand washing, etc. The Declaration was sponsored by the [American Institute for Economic Research](#), a [libertarian](#) think tank that is part of a [Koch-funded network](#) of organizations associated with [climate change denial](#). Some would say this is the "Swedish approach," which has since been seen to have failed.

The approach also does *not* take into account the emergence and expansion of more virulent strains of Covid-19 - which has already happened as I am certain

you are aware. The potential mortality would be very high if governments (local, state or national) followed this approach now.

There were many severe criticisms written about this approach, which you may want to read. It is clear that it would result in severe illness and deaths of many hundreds of thousands of persons globally as the planned exposure is not realistic. Here are two such articles for your reference: <https://theconversation.com/5-failings-of-the-great-barrington-declarations-dangerous-plan-for-covid-19-natural-herd-immunity-148975> and <https://www.businessinsider.com/herd-immunity-plan-great-barrington-declaration-wont-work-2020-10>.

I would add that my own experience as a former Director of Emergencies at UNICEF taught me to ensure that I had the very best sources of hard data and advice before trying to change policies and approaches. I would have thought that in this case, key actors at State and National levels do indeed have numerous dedicated experts working on these issues so would be well informed. I also learned that emergency response preparation and decision-making requires contingency planning for scaling up response if data or assumptions are wrong, as well as budgets to match those plans. I'm uncertain that the County has such plans in place or the means to scale up rapidly if a non-state aligned approach proves to have drastic consequences.

Thank you for your desire to limit the economic, mental and other impacts of the pandemic - an essential role where indeed more can be done. I would, however, strongly suggest that given the expertise required to determine safe public health policy in the face of a highly contagious, virulent pandemic, you not align the Board of Commissioners with a declaration that is now mostly discredited in the face of the changing situation and global public health experience.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Toole

Northport, Michigan