

February 5, 2021

Dear Leelanau County Board of Commission:

Most of my social circle is vulnerable to poor COVID outcomes. These friends and family have compromising conditions such as age and asthma. We act responsibly, social distancing, wearing a mask (and shoes and shirt) when shopping or gathering, for the wellbeing of everyone in our community. Our social lives have changed because of a pandemic worsened by the conflicting messaging from our leaders and the inept national response to a virus whose deadly and contagious characteristics were understood by the President a year ago (on tape with Bob Woodward). Worse, we now have a local official espousing "herd immunity" by promoting the Great Barrington Declaration. Why is a county official making such a proposal despite the resounding criticism of the inhumane, unscientific proposition of herd immunity via infection? To influence State Health Department actions? What would pursuing herd immunity mean for Michigan?

Currently, 5.6 percent of Michigan's population (566,630) had COVID with 2.6% of these people dying (14,797). "Herd Immunity" requires an infection rate of 70% (or more) of the population. At 70%, 6,990,900 Michiganders would be COVID positive, with a death toll of 181,763 or more. Herd Immunity isn't rationale, humane, or a pro-life approach to the pandemic. The Great Barrington Declaration provides scant specifics for a humane implementation. It's "individual preference" approach is as misguided as eliminating speed limits on the road, trusting every driver to be safe at his/her chosen rate of speed with trucks, seniors, new drivers, cars with children, etc sharing our community's roads. The Barrington authors state, "...until a vaccine is available". We have more than one vaccine approved and slowly becoming widely available. The Board of Commissioners should be energetically exploring how they/we can support our local board of health with extra funding and resources to facilitate the shot in the arm we all want for our community. Please stop behaving selfishly when we face a once in a hundred-year health crisis. Promoting the spread of the COVID virus to achieve "immunity" is flawed and inhumane. Simply having the infection does not make one immune from getting it again. As we are finding, the more spread, the greater the mutations and variations in the virus. New Zealand has .03% infection rate (1,874) and only **25** deaths. Presently, they are COVID free and have no commercial or social COVID restrictions thanks to a national strategy **supported by all competing political parties**; it wasn't about taking care of politics rather their priority was taking care of people. We yearn for this general welfare to enjoy our freedom, not the cruel fiction of herd immunity. Christian monk Thomas Merton said, "We do not exist for ourselves alone, and it is only when we are fully convinced of this fact that we begin to love ourselves properly and then also love others." Please reject the Great Barrington Declaration and its anti-life misconception of herd immunity and support our local health department in protecting lives and pursuit of a life affirming approach to immunity (mass vaccinations).

Dean Manikas
P.O. Box 15
Maple City