

Laurel Evans

Subject: FW: Great Barrington Declaration Proposal

From: Richard Kosinski <rkosinski@chartermi.net>

Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 11:44 AM

To: Michelle Crocker <mcrocker@leelanau.gov>

Cc: Ty Wessell <twessell@leelanau.gov>

Subject: Great Barrington Declaration Proposal

Dear Ms. Crocker; please include our letter in the "public comments" for the 2/9/2021 County Board of Commissioners Meeting

We were greatly dismayed to learn that the Leelanau Board of Commissioners is going to consider supporting the Great Barrington Declaration [GBD] at their meeting on Feb. 9, 2021. We are both retired board certified physicians who have lived in Leelanau County since 1986 and practiced medicine full time at Munson Medical Center for 30 years, both retiring in 2016.

The premise of the GBD is that, contrary to basic principles of epidemiology and infection control; governments should not attempt to control the infection, except for those labeled most vulnerable. Instead it would allow businesses, including restaurants and taverns, to remain open, with in-person as opposed to remote workers. Additionally, schools would remain open with in-person learning, and cultural and sporting events would continue normally without limitations on spectator attendance. There would be no attempt at testing, contact tracing, and quarantine.

The GBD authors thought that this approach would minimize the negative effects of a lockdown on the economy and on the non-Covid related health of a country's population. Allowing the pandemic to spread through a country's population would theoretically hasten the achievement of "herd immunity", which is also the goal of vaccination. In fairness when the GBD was released a robust vaccination program was not a certainty.

The basic approach advocated by the GBD in October, 2020 had been adopted as national health policy by Sweden in March, 2020. It's very close neighbor, Norway, took the opposite approach with testing starting January, 23, 2020; followed shortly by working from home, school closures, avoidance of public transportation, cancellations of sports and cultural activities, etc.

Sweden and Norway are very similar countries; sharing the same landmass, Viking heritage, with little difference between their languages, and more. Norway was part of Sweden from 1814-1905. These striking similarities allow a comparison of the GBD approach [Sweden] versus the standard approach [Norway]. As 2/5/2021 589,288 Swedes had contracted Covid 19 out of a total population of 10,099,265 for an incidence of 5.8%. During the same period 64,212 Norwegians contracted Covid 19 out of a total population of 5,421,241 for an incidence of 1.2%. The Covid 19 death rates showed an even more striking difference, 12,144 for an incidence of 0.12% in Sweden versus 582 for an incidence of 0.01% in Sweden. Swedes have been 10 times more likely to die of Covid than Norwegians! At the end of 2020, Sweden abandoned its GBD-like approach to Covid in favor of a more conventional approach, acknowledging the failure of its previous policy. King Gustaf of Sweden stated the obvious when he declared in a Christmas speech that his country had "failed" in its handling of the pandemic.

In our opinion the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners should reject any support or endorsement of the [not so [Great Barrington Declaration.

Richard Kosinski M.D.; Deborah Ochs M.D.