

July 17, 2020

## PRESS RELEASE

Today is Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup> and this is an 11:00 update. I had spoken earlier about the possibilities of a county wide facial covering/mask mandate, if we were not being responsible. In the last several days, we have seen our business community and general public make responsible decisions.

This week, Wal-Mart, Kroger, Lowe's, and probably other businesses have approved policies that require face coverings/masks while in their facilities. These decisions made by our businesses allow us, as customers, the opportunity to also make a decision of whether we choose to be their customer.

I have said, at least privately from the beginning, that it is much better for the business community to set these requirements rather than the government, and to the business community who have made these decisions, I say "thank you."

I just received an email this morning from someone who said they started shopping in West Knoxville because he/she felt safer in facilities that required mask and they were now glad that Kroger and Wal-Mart were implementing their policies. They can now shop back in Roane County.

We have allowed the business community to make these responsible decisions which I still believe is better than a government mandate.

You, as a citizen, can now make your own decision of whether you gather together without face coverings or masks. You get to choose whether you gather with family or friends with or without a facial covering/mask. You get to choose a church that may or may not require coverings or masks. You get to choose whether you think it is wise to let your children play team sports.

As our essential businesses, cities, and county governments have required facial coverings/masks, I see no reason to issue a county wide face covering/mask mandate.

Our current numbers, as of July 16<sup>th</sup>, are 105 positives, with 50 active cases and 55 recoveries. We are still getting the impact of anything that may have happened over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. Testing at the Health Department lab is now a 24-48 hour turnaround, so we will also be seeing those numbers coming in. We still anticipate our numbers going up. There are no deaths in Roane County.

RW/ba  
C:media