

PHYSICIAN STATEMENT

Regarding Premature Lifting of Restrictions

As physicians who are שומרי תורה ומצוות and on the frontlines of the active COVID-19 pandemic, we implore all fellow Jews to continue strict adherence to isolation guidelines WITHOUT exceptions.

Our Jewish communities require unique consideration and are at **higher risk for rapid disease transmission**. We live in close knit, multigenerational and interconnected communities with frequent overlapping contact in our religious commitments and in our neighborhoods, shuls, schools, and shops.

הלכה has never looked towards government guidelines alone as a measure for סכנת נפשות. Government guidelines consider political factors, financial impacts, and enforcement capabilities. We do not believe that any of these weigh more heavily than the concept of פיקוח נפש. **It is painfully obvious that government guidelines must be tailored to keep our communities safe.**

It is our unanimous medical opinion that prematurely loosening the restrictions is highly likely to result in further disease transmission and loss of life, חס ושלום.

We must remind everyone that COVID-19 **can be transmitted asymptotically** and that those who have had COVID-19 may be **contagious for weeks**, even after resolution of all symptoms. In addition, **people who have had COVID-19 may NOT be immune**. Any outing from the home must be limited to essential needs and performed with the strictest social distancing regulations. **The prohibition on all forms of group gatherings including *simchos, levayos, and minyanim* must remain in place.**

Just as we empathize with patients undergoing difficult treatments, we also understand the difficulty that these guidelines impose. These temporary measures are not easy to follow, but are medically necessary and life-saving. **In the coming weeks, new information and advancements will become available which we hope will allow for loosening of restrictions, as the concerns for פיקוח נפש allow.**

May it be the will of the קהילות של עולמנו that our קהילות be spared any further pain and tragedy.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY HEALTH UPDATE 4/19/20

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