

## When Did We Know?

In late December of 2019, China had 7 cases of serious pneumonia in a place called Wuhan. On January 7, 2020, the Chinese had diagnosed at least one of these as Corona Virus. It was their first. Our family had just returned from Key West. We still did not know.

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, South Korea diagnosed their first case of Corona. Can you guess when the U.S. had its first case diagnosed? **January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020.** This time we took note. It was in the U.S. papers!

South Korea has, as of mid-March, flattened the curve. Yes, they still have some new cases, but their health system is not overwhelmed. They have given themselves time. Now look at the curves of infection in both Italy and Iran. They are both still going up at a very high rate and their health systems are overwhelmed. Look at the curve here in the U.S. **It is the same.**

About a month ago, actually around the middle of February, I went into a medical supply store and asked for a small box of N-95 masks. There was one. I bought it. I asked the clerk if the rest had been bought out. She said that they only carried one box at a time (6 masks).

About a week later I decided to call the main hospital number here in Wellsboro and ask where Corona testing was being done. The gal there said, after some delay thinking about the question, she did not know. Then she said that I should call the emergency room at the hospital. I did. They said that they did not know where testing was being done.

The following day (in late February) I walked into the Outpatient clinic at the hospital and asked if testing was being done there and if not, where? They said I should check with my family doctor. I did, the same day. They said they did not know. Still there was no local recognition that the virus was already here, incubating.

So, now it was about 40 days since the first positive in the U.S. and the major health system in our region (UPMC) had not given its frontline employees any directives, info, etc. about testing.

There was a pretty good reason for this. Our federal government, and in particular, our President, was still not on board. Check his comments during this period. He was not listening to the National Health Folks around him. There was little preparation coming from the Feds to the States and/or health system. No stock piles of masks, ventilators, dressing gear, testing kits, etc. Note that some Federal officials close to the President and Vice President have now tested positive. **State and local governments were on their own.**

In Washington State, and especially in the Seattle area the crisis moved on. The University of Washington began to create its own testing procedures. There was no other choice. No time.

That must happen throughout the U.S. Our federal government is protecting itself politically first. Now it will throw money at us....too late.

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