



California

GET IT TOGETHER!

The COVID response in Los Angeles and across California is deeply flawed. While we are reluctant to criticize in the middle of a pandemic, the missteps are so severe that we must speak out.

There are several fundamental public health principles that are not being followed.

First and foremost, the top-down approach that excludes the private sector and community doesn't work. There is no question that we need strong leadership and direction from government. However, it is the community health providers, religious institutions, schools, businesses, fraternities and sororities, neighborhood associations and all manner of organizations that have the deepest connection to the community.

Whether it is in prevention, testing or vaccination very little effort to engage community has taken place. This is much of the reason that efforts to contain the virus are failing. The heavy-handed approach to talking at people rather than to people isn't going to succeed.

Likewise, government bureaucracy is literally killing many Californians every day. Expert committees; lengthy protocols and exhortations to comply are not enough. What is needed is a partnership.

We are at war against COVID. In WWII, Americans bought war bonds, collected their metal scraps; lived with rationing and supported the war effort wholeheartedly. The absence of national leadership has been tragic. But, we as California, the fifth largest economy in the world, must do better.

- Communication must be clear, transparent, concise and backed up with data.
- Scientists, doctors and community leaders must be in the lead in briefing the public rather than politicians.
- Vaccine distribution can be done at big sites, but it must also be decentralized. We need urgency, less paperwork and easier access immediately.
- We need state of the art creative advertising to promote vaccination.

In prevention, we need a harm reduction approach that minimizes exposure but allows people whatever outlets are relatively safer while we fight through this plague. Absolute abstinence doesn't work.

WE CAN AND WE MUST WIN. THE CAN-DO CALIFORNIA ATTITUDE IS THE WAY TO GO. THE SOONER WE EMBRACE IT, THE SOONER OUR LIVES WILL IMPROVE.