

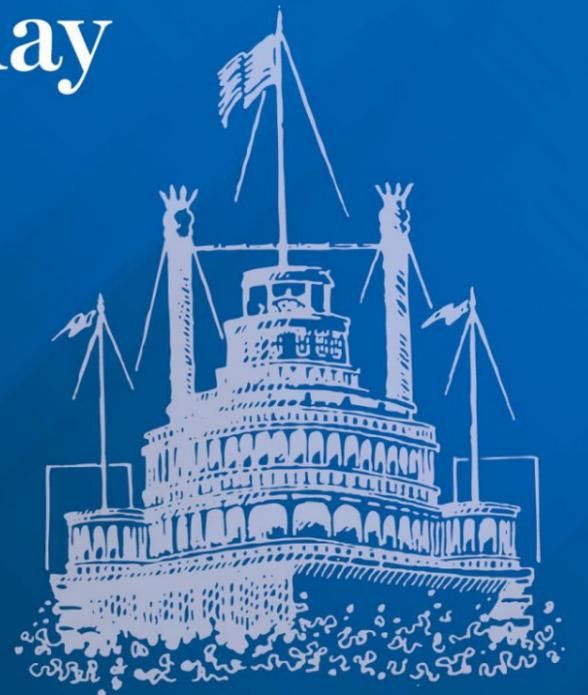
# Opinion: Everyone has a role to play in stopping this pandemic

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Millie Flanigan  
For Steamboat Pilot & Today

## Opinion

### Steamboat Pilot & Today



Steamboat Springs and Routt County truly are a community that takes care of its own. My family has been on the receiving end of this care, and it is truly a force of love and generosity that people who live in different places are astounded by time and time again.

Caring for each other is simply who we are and what we do. However, care in the face of coronavirus does not look like a GoFundMe page or a meal train for a friend facing a health crisis. The care we can offer, in this moment in time, is stepping up and making the individual sacrifices necessary to slow the spread of this virus.

We cannot wait until next week to realize that this is important. Our community has the opportunity to take this on. Yes, we may all feel a bit crazy as we take these measures that feel a bit extreme, but if we all do this together, every bit of evidence has shown that it truly will make a difference.

Everyone has a role to play and the time is now. The schools, the resort, multiple businesses and restaurants are now closed. The sacrifices these organizations are making for the greater good of our community are enormous, and my heart goes out to them and their employees.

As important as these closings are, they cannot stand alone. Now, we as individuals need to step up and do our part. We need to make the hard choices and individual sacrifices that will truly save lives.

Social distancing is not just a word. Social distancing means staying home with your family and only your family. Yes, you can go outside but if you do go, go with your family or with one or two other people and make every effort to stay 6 feet apart.

Do not go out to recreate in large groups. You are no less likely to have the droplet from a sneeze or cough land on you outside than you are inside. No play dates or social gatherings, no matter the age of your child. The schools have closed in order to limit the spread of coronavirus among our children and subsequently, their families and our community. Having play dates or teen social gatherings flies in face of the gains we have made by closing the schools.

Young kids and teens will protest. It is our job to explain to them, in an age-appropriate way, why they are being asked to make these sacrifices. If they are not able to make the right decisions for themselves, it is our job to make those decisions for them. We, as adults, must hold ourselves to these same standards.

We know the virus can be spread prior to any inkling of feeling ill. In this moment, social distancing is not something to be done only when we feel ill or have a fever. If we have a chance in our community to slow this virus down, we need to be vigilant now.

None of this is convenient or easy, but it is not forever and peoples' lives hang in the balance. Think about all your high-risk friends and family, grandparents, friends and children with asthma, respiratory issues, immune disorders, diabetes, hypertension, lung and heart disease.

Remember this virus is 10 times deadlier than the regular flu. Unlike the flu, none of us have immunity to it, and it is going to hit our community in a matter of weeks vs. being spread out over months like typical influenza. This combination is what makes this not just an illness to be dealt with but a pandemic and a true medical crisis.

The answer in the face of this crisis is not fear and panic or denial. The answer lies in making the individual decisions, no matter how remote they may feel, that will take care of and save lives in our community.

If we do not do our part to help slow the trajectory of this pandemic down, our healthcare system will crumble in face of the exponential spread of this virus. We have watched other countries' physicians faced with the excruciating choice about who will live and who will die because there simply aren't enough ventilators.

If the trajectory of this virus continues, we know for a fact that we simply do not have enough ventilators in our country or in our community to save the lives of all of the severely affected individuals. We would be foolish not to learn from the profoundly negative impact delayed true social distancing has had on these countries that are only weeks ahead of us with the spread of this virus.

Yes, the virus is still going to come, but if we can slow the spread of the virus and allow our health care system to care for individuals and not be overwhelmed, it will be an entirely different outcome. The time is now for everyone to step up like only our community can.

The coming days and weeks will decide how this virus affects our community and the lives of the people we care about and love. We have an opportunity to change the face of the pandemic in our beautiful corner of the world, and there is not any other community in the world that I would want on my side as we face this challenge.

*Millie Flanigan is a physician assistant practicing at Steamboat Springs Family Medicine. She has called Steamboat Springs home since 1990. She is married to Gardner Flanigan and is mom to Bode and Merritt Flanigan.*

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Newest  

KC **Kevin Cerone** 5 DAYS AGO  
Hi Guys, I have been the one going to the store for the family and bringing everything home . If the virus can live on hard surface for 9 days (When info first came out is was 12 hours ) So... When I bring Items home does every package need to be wiped down with cleaner ? I am watching people more at the stores and what I am seeing is everybody is touching all surfaces and workers handling produce with no gloves on . People are picking up produce and putting it right back . We are also exchanging money at the stores with people we don't know. I almost feel like we have to fire hose down outside and throw our clothes we are wearing right in the washer and head to the shower . How long does it stay on our skin for ? Just some thoughts to share and would like to hear yours ! Thanks !

REPLY  0



**Sue Davies** 5 DAYS AGO



I thank you Millie. I appreciate your professional medial opinion and stern message.

REPLY ^ 0

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RA

**Robert Anzulewicz** 6 DAYS AGO

Perfect!

REPLY ^ 0

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ACTIVE CONVERSATIONS



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12



Letter: Please, shelter in place Yampa Valley

4