

March 27, 2020

Dear Community Members,

The COVID-19 St. Louis Medical Advisory Board urgently pleads with any individual planning to travel to the St. Louis metropolitan area for Pesach to **STAY WHERE YOU ARE AND DO NOT COME**. We urgently plead with any local family that intends to bring their children, married or unmarried, home for Pesach to **CANCEL THEIR PLANS** and arrange for Pesach to be observed in their current location. This includes individuals who have experienced COVID-19 symptoms and those who have not, and those who believe they have recently recovered from COVID-19 infection.

Our St Louis families need to understand that the country is spending 2 trillion dollars to keep people in their homes and to keep businesses closed. "Stay-at-Home" orders like the one in St. Louis are intended to prevent traveling even across the street or across town, and certainly to prevent travel across the country. Each person who travels unknowingly adds to the spread of this terrible disease and worsens the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions are in place specifically because asymptomatic carriers are the major cause of spread of this disease. The recent explosive spread of infection after social gatherings, even though every person who attended thought they were well, proves the role of asymptomatic carriers. Thus, every person traveling to St. Louis from a city or area with a greater number of infections increases the risk of infections in their St. Louis family members, especially older members, and contributes to increasing infections, hospitalizations, and deaths in the St. Louis community. At the same time, each person who travels to St. Louis from an area with fewer infections increases the risk to their city's community when they return home. And no two cities are equal. We implore everyone to do the right thing and inconvenience yourselves this Pesach and **STAY WHERE YOU ARE**.

We understand and empathize with the families affected and realized it will cause emotional hardship and logistical challenges. However, it is obvious to us that this is a matter of **SEKANOT NEFASHOT** (mortal danger). As physicians, we are stunned by the rapid and exponential spread of COVID-19, the severity of illness, the number of deaths, and the potential devastation of an overwhelmed healthcare system. As Jews, we understand the vital importance of following expert medical advice and Psak Halachah. It is in our power to make a difference and to **SAVE LIVES**. These recommendations were formulated by the Board at the urgent behest of the undersigned Rabbonim.

COVID-19 Saint Louis Jewish Medical Advisory Board,

Larry Brown, MD, PhD, Emergency Medicine
Mark Friedman, MD, Cardiology
Daniela Hermelin, MD, Pathology, Anatomic and Clinical
Morey Gardner, MD, Infectious Disease
Tessa Gardner, MD, Infectious Disease
Craig Reiss, MD, Cardiology
Todd Silverman, MD, Neurology
Greg Storch, MD, Infectious Disease

Rabbi Menachem Greenblatt
Rabbi Yosef Landa
Rabbonim Achraim Vaad Hoer of St Louis on behalf of all the Congregational Rabbonim