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3-17-2020

### March 17, 2020: Still No Community Transmission

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Title: Still No Community Transmission

Date: 2020-03-17T04:21:00.000-04:00

3/17/2020--Happy St. Patrick's Day. But of course it is not happy. Governor Wolf ordered a statewide shutdown of non-essential businesses yesterday. But, actually, it will not be enforced. So, it amounts to a suggestion. The reason for this may be that, while there are now six confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Allegheny County, for example, there is still not one confirmed case of community transmission. (Story [here](#)). That would mean that County government would lack authority to order these closures and might mean the Governor lacks authority as well. But more than a lack of legal authority, it probably means that this measure is a mistake. Government officials and health officials also have been acting as if these closures have no costs of their own--as if it is better to be safe than sorry. I wish instead they had translated the loss of income that they are causing into future deaths of despair. For that is going to happen to some people who will go bankrupt or simply lose all their savings or will live in destitution. Less stringent orders--reducing restaurant capacity, ordering business to serve fewer people at a time, etc.--would not have been as effective, but they might have been sufficiently effective to retard and spread out community transmission. After all, it is not as if these measures either are going to prevent community transmission. And less stringent measures would be far less costly to people. Some income is better than none.