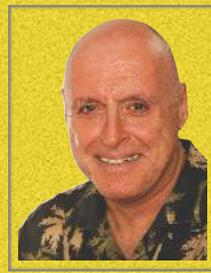


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



563 We Now Must Navigate the Road to Recovery

The governor and her advisory team released their road to recovery yesterday. I'm Jerry Roberts and what they didn't say might be as important as what they did say. I'll try to fill in some gaps, today on The Extra Point.

I won't list all the details of the administration's road to recovery. You can get all those details here on The Point and in the Guam Daily Post, other main media, and social media. I do want to talk about some things that I didn't hear yesterday, plus offer a few thoughts.

There are no guidelines for what conditions must be to put us back into lockdown. They were vague on the answer. Dr. Cabrera suggested that five infections a day might be acceptable. How about eight or 10 a day? Is there a number? I'm encouraged that they'll be looking at five-day rolling averages from here on out. My guess is that somebody on that team has been visiting Dr. Peter Lombard's Facebook page.

I'd like to know what other areas they're looking at for data. In example, are they connected with officials in Georgia to get an insider's view of information as that state opens up?

Are they in touch with people in all of Guam's principal tourism markets to work out details on not only when we can expect them to be ready to send people here, but under what conditions?

The governor mentioned that a smartphone app will be used to help with contact tracing. I've been asking questions about this for weeks and I'm glad we'll now have it. I just wonder why it's taken us this long to harness the technology that other jurisdictions have had in place ever since this virus situation began.

The mention was made that a requirement for restaurants to open for sit-down service might be to require patrons to sign in and presumably give contact details. I'm obviously not a lawyer but I think that would face a legal challenge on privacy

issues. You can encourage people to download and use a smartphone app, but I'm not sure you can force them to reveal personal information as a requirement to eat.

The task of monitoring compliance of businesses is said to fall to the Departments of Public Health and Social Services along with Revenue & Tax. The governor said they have the staff to handle the job, but what will they be checking on? In reality I believe social media will become the defacto compliance bureau, the island's watchdog. Customers who see things that aren't right are going to complain straight to Facebook and those threads will be widely shared.

Finally, the recovery plan stipulates that to make it to the fourth and final level where everything is opened up, it will require a working vaccine. They might want to reconsider this one because this family of viruses has done a good job in resisting vaccines. HIV is related to COVID-19 and there is still no vaccine for that, some 40 years after it began to terrorize the world in the early 1980s.

We likely will not see a vaccine. Just like with HIV, treatments are now showing to have a positive impact on the virus. It's likely that we'll soon see several of these emerge which will reduce the severity of COVID-19, eliminating many of the hospitalizations and fatalities. This may be as good as it gets. In the end it's still up to us to take precautions, to hold ourselves to a high standard of hygiene, distancing, and encouraging others to do the same. That will keep us all moving forward on the road to recovery.

That's The Extra Point. Stay home and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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