

We Can't Fight this Virus with a Vaccine

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Letter

There's been so much expression of hope and optimism for a COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, researchers are working on about 100 vaccines. Vaccines, as we know it, stimulate the immune system to produce antibodies that will fight against a particular disease. But the question is, "what if the vaccines in the works now don't work?" "What if after the development of a vaccine people resist it?"

Vaccine development is a rigorous one and takes years to come through. Reliance on the manufacture and subsequent use of COVID-19 vaccine could be a catastrophic failure if we don't have a robust national strategy and plan to combat this virus. It has already been shown that the US has no national strategy for COVID-19. Rather, the federal government has punted the ball to the states.

There's little the state can do. But the states of New York and California have shown tremendous leadership when it comes to the containment of COVID-19 spread. They did not wait for the production of a vaccine to bend the curve and sustain the slant in case and mortality numbers of COVID-19. Citizens have taken it as their own sacrifice to the country and have been following the guidelines provided to them by these states and their local leaders.

So, if vaccine is not the right answer, what is? Our behavior comes handy. Behavior, in this case is what we, as a people, have to do. It is what we have to do to protect others and stop the spread of this virus.

Wearing of facemask is one crucial behavior we must adhere to. We have to continually put on our facemasks as at when appropriate. This protects that cancer-ridden child from getting infected by our bad behavior. It shields the elderly from being exposed. It protects the immuno-deficient from contacting COVID-19. Wearing of facemask is not just about us but more about others.

Social distancing is another variable. Given the fact that asymptomatic people do spread this virus, it is important that we stay 6-feet apart from each other. You don't know who have the virus. We are not walking about with a COVID-19-free certificate. And there's nothing like that because you can test negative today and the next day you test positive.

Hand washing is another behavior we must adhere to in order to stop the spread of this virus. This may sound like an old record and minutiae but it is important. We should avoid crowds of more than 10 people. Don't go to pool parties or sunbathing in the beach or attend church service. Skip that graduation ceremony, birthday parties and village meetings for now.

We have seen several bad behaviors from, supposedly, political office holders. They have been violating and not keeping to their own guidelines. This must change. They must model good behavior, at the minimum, by wearing facemasks.

We must all sacrifice not our life or money, but behavior. Our fathers and pre-fathers sacrificed their lives. Now is the time to ask, "What can I do for others?" Simple, change your behavior. Follow the CDC guidelines. Do something for you, your neighbors, and your country.