



CITY OF
FAYETTEVILLE
ARKANSAS

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Good Morning,

The Fayetteville Board of Health and the Fayetteville City Health Officer are requesting that the Bikes, Blues and BBQ motorcycle rally be postponed this year. As you are aware, our region is currently experiencing a surge in Covid-19 cases due to the combination of the Delta variant and low vaccination rates. This has resulted in our regional hospital systems, including Washington Regional Medical Center, Northwest Medical Center, and Mercy Northwest, all being strained in every way possible – from bed capacity to blood supplies to staff. In particular, the strain on the healthcare staff cannot be overstated. The doctors and nurses that are working in the Emergency Departments and ICU wards as well as the specific Covid-19 wards are already overwhelmed with their current patient loads. Historically, the Bikes, Blues and BBQ event has resulted in increased traumas and emergency room visits due to the combination of motorcycle accidents, alcohol intake, and the sheer number of attendees. In

years past, Washington Regional Medical Center has added extra trauma teams during the event. This year, there is not enough staff available to do so. In addition, we expect additional Covid-19 infections and hospitalizations to result as well.

Our hospitals are currently full to the point that it has not been unusual over the past few weeks for all emergency departments in the area to be on divert. Our Covid-19 units as well as our ICUs are at capacity. By adding the expected traumas and ED visits that result during Bikes, Blues, and BBQ along with the increased Covid-19 cases to our already strained healthcare systems is inviting disaster. What then happens to one of our citizens that is experiencing a heart attack or stroke?

Our healthcare systems are struggling to take care of our current local healthcare needs. It is in the best interest of all concerned parties that the event be postponed. Lives depend upon it.

Sincerely,

Martha Ann B. Sharkey, MD

Martha Ann B. Sharkey, MD, FAAP
Fayetteville City Health Officer

Hershey Garner, MD

Hershey Garner, MD, JD
Chair, Fayetteville Board of Health