



An open letter to all Vieques residents

March 19, 2020

Viequense, you have to take COVID 19 seriously.

We see how many people have taken this time of isolation as if it were a vacation. Some take rides in their cars, others go shopping on the big island, others gather to share. Obviously, we are not aware of the danger that these actions entail.

Four out of five people that have the virus were infected by people who did not know they had the virus. In other words, people who have the virus but do not show symptoms become transmitters, causing other people to become infected. Conclusion: all those around us are potential transmitters of COVID 19.

This conclusion has very serious repercussions. COVID 19 has already spread through 156 countries. In almost all countries the virus begins to spread apparently slowly, and suddenly an explosion occurs with the growth of infected people.

I will try to explain this exponential growth with a riddle.

We all know the bioluminescent bay Puerto Mosquito in Vieques. Suppose one day an algae, say sargassum, appears in the bay. This algae is going to reproduce at the rate of one offspring a day. That is, the first day there is one plant, the second day two, the third day, four, and so on. We have already calculated that in a hundred days, the entire bay will be covered with sargassum.

Now the riddle. If it takes 100 days for sargassum to cover the entire bay, how many days did it take to cover only half the bay?

Answer: It took 99 days to cover half. Since the growth is exponential, the amount of algae doubles every day, and therefore it took a single day to fill the second half of the bay. What's more, still on the 15th or 20th, day, if you looked, you hardly saw any sargassum. But it gets worse. On day 101, exponential growth continues, and sargassum has taken over Media Luna and Navio Beaches, and it's approaching Sunbay. The system has collapsed.

The growth of COVID 19 also behaves like this. It would seem that there are few people infected and suddenly, overnight, cases multiply, for example, in the United States, on March 16, 1,900 new cases of people with COVID 19 occurred. On March 17, there were 3,600 new cases. In Italy, on March 16, 3,200 new cases were added. On March 17 this number rose to 7,700. Spain woke up on March 12 with 501 new cases. The day after there were 2,100 new cases. These three countries have something in common with Vieques: the attitude of the population. In Spain, Italy and the United States, many people, as in Vieques, did not take seriously the need to isolate themselves and not form groups, or go to places where people congregate. In those three

countries they are dearly paying the consequences. In the United States, 97 people have already died from complications caused by COVID 19. In Spain, the number of deaths amounts to 598, or 4 percent of all those infected, and in Italy, 2,976 people have died from COVID 19, which is 8 percent of those infected. If Vieques follows the Italian pattern, 8 out of every 100 infected Viequenses will die. The same as in the biobay riddle, our health system in Vieques will collapse.

Do we want Vieques to join this group? Please stay home. Do not go outside if it is not to get food, medicine or another basic need. There will be better times for many activities with friends, family and neighbors. But this is not that time.

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ViequesLove