



Laura Belin <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Qs about "real-time data" vs. modeling

Laura Belin <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Mon, Jun 1, 2020 at 9:02 AM

To: "Mccoy, Amy" <amy.mccoy@idph.iowa.gov>

Still seeking comment on why the IDPH has opted to use "real-time data" rather than modeling provided by the University of Iowa experts.

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Date: Tue, May 26, 2020 at 3:47 PM

Subject: Fwd: Qs about "real-time data" vs. modeling

To: Mccoy, Amy <amy.mccoy@idph.iowa.gov>

Hello Amy,

I'm still seeking comment or clarification on why Dr. Pedati was eager to work with UI specialists on modeling in late March/early April when Iowa's approach this month indicates the state will not use such modeling to inform decisions on reopening certain types of businesses or venues.

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Date: Fri, May 22, 2020 at 12:16 PM

Subject: Fwd: Qs about "real-time data" vs. modeling

To: Mccoy, Amy <amy.mccoy@idph.iowa.gov>

I'm circling back on these questions. Did Dr. Pedati decide to rely on "real-time data" rather than modeling? Or was that Governor Reynolds' decision?

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Date: Wed, May 20, 2020 at 12:27 PM

Subject: Fwd: Qs about "real-time data" vs. modeling

To: Mccoy, Amy <amy.mccoy@idph.iowa.gov>

Amy, circling back on these questions.

Again today Governor Reynolds repeatedly said IDPH can monitor virus activity "down to a zip code." What is the basis for that assertion? A lot of Iowans don't live close to a testing site and haven't managed to schedule an appointment after completing the Test Iowa assessment.

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Date: Tue, May 19, 2020 at 4:28 PM

Subject: Qs about "real-time data" vs. modeling

To: Mccoy, Amy <amy.mccoy@idph.iowa.gov>

Hello Amy,

At Monday's news conference, Governor Reynolds said that Iowa's

"aggressive testing strategy" allows officials to monitor coronavirus activity in communities, enabling "evidence based decision making in real time. While we do refer to models and projections from external partners and other resources and appreciate the information that they provide, we know they're based on assumptions at a certain point in time. So we rely more heavily on our real-time data and our expert team of epidemiologists at the Department of Public Health, who are all studying it every day."

I have obtained correspondence from the University of Iowa showing that in late March and early April, Dr. Pedati was very interested in collaborating with UI researchers to develop a COVID-19 model for Iowa. In one of the messages, Dr. Pedati specifically expresses interest in a model that shows the impact of public health mitigations (like closing schools or non-essential retail, or limiting travel) on outcomes. My questions:

1. Whose decision was it to "rely more heavily on our real-time data" than on the modeling provided by the University of Iowa team, who have warned relaxing social distancing measures would lead to increases in COVID-19 cases and deaths? Did Governor Reynolds make that call, or did Dr. Pedati determine the modeling provided under contract wasn't very useful?
2. Is it IDPH's contention that UI researchers are studying the COVID-19 data less diligently every day than the IDPH team of epidemiologists?
3. The correspondence indicates that as of early April, IDPH was interested in a "nuanced" model, "tailored for the state of Iowa, that might be of value for longer-term projections (e.g. if a second wave of the virus materializes in the fall or winter)." Is it the position of IDPH that such modeling could be useful for state experts down the road? Or does Dr. Pedati intend to continue looking mainly at day-to-day numbers for positive tests, hospitalizations, and so on?
4. Governor Reynolds has repeatedly indicated that Test Iowa allows officials to identify hot spots and get out ahead of outbreaks. But I have heard from many people who don't live near one of the drive-through testing sites and can't schedule a test, even though they were told after completing the online assessment that they qualify for a COVID-19 test. How confident are Dr. Pedati and her team that the "real-time data" the state is reviewing represents a complete picture of coronavirus activity around Iowa now?
5. Does IDPH have any additional comment related to the value of modeling in adjusting COVID-19 mitigation policies?

Thanks in advance.

Laura

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