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# Pashman's Viewpoint: Pittsburgh leadership in a time of crisis

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Across our region, Pittsburghers from all walks of life are leading each day, helping us chart a course in unfamiliar waters. These leaders' commitment to our regional community during this unprecedented time will help ensure that COVID-19 – challenging on many levels and for so many people – will not define who we are.

This viral pandemic has dealt an incredible blow. While we may be reeling from that blow, we're also rising up, lifting each other as we climb. Perhaps at no other time in Pittsburgh's history has coming together in partnership to address the needs of our regional community been more important.

The demand is great for those who lead professionally, as well as those who lead in everyday ways. We need medical experts, CEOs, educators, mayors, faith leaders, philanthropists, researchers and many others to step forward. In these times of uncertainty, we're calling on your share of experience and wisdom, along with your compassion, empathy, hope and patience. We need your gifted ability to create solidarity and to inspire and unleash innovation. The Pittsburgh region is a place where leadership has always been defined by a shared commitment to community.

Within the last two weeks, we have witnessed many rise to the occasion across our region. Individuals from the public, private and philanthropic sectors are responding to circumstances that most of us have never seen before. Elected and public officials, representing our region at all levels of government, are working to keep residents safe and are taking steps to protect and prepare our region for its ultimate recovery.

Private-sector leaders continue business operations with contingency plans that ensure employees' well-being and security and contribute to the common good by reducing person-to-person contact.

Local companies are stepping up to address urgent shortages in the supply chain. Medical device manufacturer Philips Respironics, which has a presence in Murrysville, is ramping up production of critical equipment, like ventilators. And MSA Safety Inc. in Butler County, a global safety equipment manufacturer, is increasing respirator production and has donated more than 60,000 N95 masks to help protect those on the front line of health care. Employees in grocery stores like Giant Eagle are working around the clock to stock food and supplies and to clean stores for customers' safety. And the foundation community – specifically The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, Hillman Family Foundations and Richard King Mellon Foundation – have partnered with the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania on a \$10 million #COVID19 emergency fund to help those hit hardest. Our research universities, the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, have stepped up for vaccine research and the use of AI modeling to fight the spread of the virus. These are just a few examples of how Pittsburghers are always ready to help. By the time this is published, I know many more such examples will come to light, just as new challenges will present themselves.

Faced with both challenges and opportunities, Pittsburgh is choosing to respond with action, resilience and partnership. Our region is home to people who have always stepped up to solve some of the world's toughest problems – armed with innovation, intellect and technology.

As a region we came together last year to envision our future, and we are holding fast to that vision now more than ever. In the coming weeks and months, the Allegheny Conference may need to revise its agenda to account for the pandemic and the current and near-term implications – reprioritizing to address those challenges and needs that are especially pressing. But one thing is certain: We will continue to work across sectors to support our region's economic future and quality of life for all.



ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

Stefani Pashman is CEO of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.

As the days, weeks and months ahead unfold, we will support one another like never before. We are rising up together and helping our region – and the world – to recover and rebuild.

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