

Statement from Livingston County Administrator Ian Coyle on the Declaration of a Local State of Emergency in Livingston County

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is here in the United States, spreading in New York and is impacting daily lives in ways we have not seen in generations. COVID-19 is classified as a pandemic. New York State recently declared a State of Emergency to address the statewide response to this concern.

Livingston County, effective today March 14, 2020 at 5 pm, has issued a local state of emergency.

Livingston County as a public service and public health provider is on the front lines of the response and preparations for the virus to hit within our geographic borders. While there are no confirmed cases in Livingston County, we anticipate there will be many and that growth will happen in the near future. There are likely many positive cases in our community right now. Work, school, personal and social life will change some from the norms and habits of pre-pandemic. We are entering into uncharted territory.

I take comfort – and you should too as residents of Livingston County - in that we have what is called a full-service county and we are thus appropriately set up to handle such emergent situations. We have trained, professional nursing staff in our County Health department. We have countywide Emergency Medical Services. We have road patrol in the Sheriff's Office, an Emergency Management department, a formal Disaster Response Team, a next-gen 911 Center (including a back-up 911 center) and most importantly an incredibly dedicated group of public servants across multiple disciplines prepared, trained and ready to serve you in this time of need.

This is indeed the new normal for the foreseeable future. We need your help in that we need you to be calm, safe, patient and understanding.

I, as County Administrator, have met with all of our county departments over the last week and we have continuity of operations plans (COOPs) in place to deliver essential services in these trying times. We met to address capabilities and allocate resources for the community in advance of positive cases. I have approved additional staffing and we have taken steps to secure additional supplies to make sure residents are safe and prepared.

The messaging and guidance from the CDC and the NYS Department of Health has been centered on reducing density and gatherings and the promotion of additional testing to reduce the risks and exposures. With the addition of 28 testing sites in the state and the expansion of expedited testing, we are expecting to better assess the community exposure in a matter of weeks if not days. The goal is to not overwhelm the local health and hospital system when the positive case-count begins to escalate. Relative to public interactions, we have closed visitation to the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation (CNR) and County Jail. We have suspended operations of the senior nutrition congregate meal sites and, today, we also suspended activities of the Garden

of Life Adult Day Care at the CNR. County operations will continue and the buildings will be open for services. However, as situational awareness changes - we may experience service impacts or minimally may change how and when we deliver certain county administrative, legal and social services. We have asked our department heads to review their processes and consider adjustments to the way they deliver services

What can you do as a resident of Livingston County?

- Be patient and know that processes, policies and everyday norms will be changing.
- Wash your hands and practice good hygiene.
- Stay home from work if you are sick.
- Check on loved ones.
- Promote and practice social distancing.
- Be prepared but not scared.
- Instead of physically visiting a county building, consider alternative means. Please mail, email, or call.

And finally – specific to the health of our community - If you have a fever, cough or trouble breathing please call your health care provider to assess. If you feel as though you may have had exposure to COVID-19 please call the County Department of Health at 585-243-7290