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## **Delaware County's March 15 Update to Brief Residents on Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Today the Pennsylvania Department of Health announced 16 additional positive cases of COVID-19 in the state. There is one new case in Delaware County. The total number of cases in Delaware County is seven. The total number of cases in the state is 63. The State is no longer classifying cases as presumptive when the results comes back from the state lab and then confirmed when the results comes back from the CDC lab. Cases confirmed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health are now all considered confirmed.

Throughout the day, the County has been in communication with leaders in our neighboring counties, members of our First Responder Community, local Health Care providers and local elected leaders. We are working collectively to mitigate the spread of the virus. County Council Chairman Brian Zidek was in contact with Senator Bob Casey this afternoon and discussed increased testing for Delaware County residents and mitigations efforts. The County is working to implement plans and procedures and anticipates having an update for our residents tomorrow and in the coming days.

As we reported yesterday, Governor Wolf advised that non-essential businesses should close for 14 days. The Governor gave examples of non-essential businesses. These include movie theatres, bars, shopping malls, hair salons and gyms. Restaurants are urged to only offer take-out orders. Essential retail facilities such as pharmacies, grocery stores and gas stations and their suppliers will remain open. The goal is to prevent of the spread of the virus. Limiting unnecessary social outings like going to the movies, a bar, the gym, clothes shopping, etc. is how we can accomplish this.

Delaware County is strongly urging business owners and residents to follow this guidance. It is important that we are all following to the guidance coming from the Federal Government, the State and the County. We have the opportunity to stay ahead of this if we take these precautions immediately. We have a very narrow window of time to take measures now to prevent this from rapidly spreading.

“Many Delaware County businesses are adhering to the advisement, however some unfortunately are not” said Chairman Brian Zidek. “We all need to be exerting community responsibility. We have the opportunity to learn from other countries and do things differently and can mitigate the spread of the virus, but that doesn't work if we're not all taking measures.”

Council acknowledges the concern that businesses shutting down for two weeks may hurt local business owners. Delaware County will be working with the Commerce Center and other organizations and departments to request federal relief funding for businesses. Council has had discussions on ways to lessen the financial burden for small businesses and will be sharing that information soon. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development is offering working capital loans to businesses impacted by COVID-19. Information and resources will be posted to this website as it becomes available:

<https://dced.pa.gov/resources/>

The Delaware County Government Center will be closed to the public on Monday, March 16. Government Center offices will operate with a reduced and staggered staff to ensure the continuity of government, however the offices will not be open to the public. Residents can call government offices on March 16 but are not able to access the building.

The Delaware County Court of Common Pleas will be suspending all judicial operations on Monday, March 16, and Tuesday, March 17. A Common Pleas Court Judge will be available at the County Courthouse during regular business hours to hear temporary protection from abuse applications on March 16 and March 17. The Delaware County Magisterial Courts will be available, but only to conduct preliminary criminal arraignments and review afterhours temporary protection from abuse requests.

On March 16, 2020 President Judge Kevin F. Kelly relatedly intends to file with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court an application under the Pennsylvania Rules of Judicial Administration seeking authorization to declare a judicial emergency, which if allowed will access various additional authorities to further address this public health crisis and the court's ability to continue to provide critically essential judicial services.

More details about the operations of the Delaware County Government Center, the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas and Magisterial District Courts will be released in the following days.

Residents should refrain from going to Emergency Rooms if they have symptoms and want to get tested for COVID-19. Local Emergency Rooms are not testing for COVID-19. If you have symptoms- you should call 911 or 1-877-PA-HEALTH. Emergency Rooms are not testing and we don't want residents to be in hospitals if it's not necessary, where they are more likely to contract the virus or other illnesses. If you have another health emergency—then you should go the ER as you normally would.

Right now, the best way to protect yourself is to take the same precautions you would to prevent the flu or common cold:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with your elbow to avoid touching your face
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm/hot water for at least 20 seconds
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items
- If you are feeling sick, stay home. Rest, take care of yourself and don't spread the germs.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you are asked to call the State Health Department at 1-877-PA-HEALTH or 911.

The County has created a website dedicated to information on the Coronavirus, including prevention, resources and a FAQ section with link to the PA Health Department and CDC.

The website is:

[www.delcopa.gov/ich/resources/coronavirus.html](http://www.delcopa.gov/ich/resources/coronavirus.html)

Residents are encouraged to register for the DelcoAlert notification system which alerts residents of updates and emergencies. You can register here: [www.delcopa.gov/delcoalert/delcoalert.html](http://www.delcopa.gov/delcoalert/delcoalert.html)