

Community Leaders,

Analysse here from Governor Polis' community engagement team! We know that sharing information is key, especially during a crisis. In an effort to continue to provide you with an official update from the Governor's office, below includes the latest steps we are taking to respond to the Coronavirus threat.

***NEW* COVID-19 Webpage**

Our administration recently unveiled our new COVID-19 webpage on the governor's site -- covid19.colorado.gov/. This resource will keep you up-to-date on the latest statistics and the latest guidance on how we can protect ourselves and protect our most vulnerable populations.

Topline Update

As of this morning we have 277 positive cases, 2 deaths, 38 hospitalizations out of 2,952 completed tests.

Furthermore, yesterday, the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LDCHE) announced a positive COVID-19 case in a resident of a Long Term Care facility. The facility also has a staff person who tested positive for COVID-19.

Due to the high-risk nature of residents in the facility, a team of infection preventionists and epidemiologists from CDC and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) have been working closely with LCDHE and providing on-site technical assistance and support regarding case investigation, infection prevention, healthcare worker safety assessments, and personal protective equipment.

#DoingMyPartCO

On Monday, we kicked off a social media campaign called #DoingMyPartCO where we challenged Coloradans to show how they are practicing best habits to keep themselves and others safe: practicing proper hygiene and social distancing, working from home, avoiding crowded places, and taking it easy on the toilet paper at the supermarket.

We're challenging everyone to take to social media to show how you're doing your part -- consider this an official invitation for you, your organizations, and your networks to be part of the campaign!

Colorado COVID-19 Relief Fund

We've also been inundated with calls from across the state from folks who want to know how they can help.

The Governor unveiled the Colorado COVID-19 Relief Fund co-chaired by community leaders Roxane White and Rick Sapkin. In just 2 days we've raised over \$2.8 million -- a remarkable achievement that shows the generous hearts of Coloradans.

These funds will supplement the governmental response to coronavirus, and will help pay for things like medical supplies, cleaning supplies, food services, child care for emergency workers, behavioral health support, and so much more.

Visit www.HelpColoradoNow.org to donate today! Every dollar counts!

And if you're an organization that is helping with the response, you will be able to apply for funds starting early next week.

Help Colorado Now

We know that Coloradans aren't just financially generous -- they're generous with their time, their energy, and their effort.

The Governor launched our official volunteer effort: Help Colorado Now.

We are looking for volunteers -- especially those who are current or retired health care professionals -- to help at-risk individuals all across our state with a wide variety of support including health care assistance, mental wellness support, food bank distribution, child care services, and more.

So please visit www.helpcoloradonow.org to sign up to be a volunteer or volunteer leader, and if you are an organization, government agency or non-profit seeking volunteer assistance, we can match you with volunteers in your area or volunteers available virtually.

Donating Blood

In addition to the need for funding and volunteers -- we also have an urgent need for blood donations. Blood banks are reporting a sharp drop in donations, attributed to fears about contracting COVID-19.

We want to clear up any misinformation: donating blood is a safe process and people should not be concerned about giving or receiving blood during this challenging time. And while blood isn't needed for coronavirus treatment, it's urgently needed for all of the other medical issues that crop up. We need more healthy donors to give now to prevent a blood shortage.

So please visit www.vitalant.org, to find a blood drive or donation center near you.

Federal Loan Assistance for Colorado's Small Businesses

Colorado small businesses throughout all 64 counties impacted by COVID-19 can seek individual small business loans up to \$2M as part of the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program. The SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans assistance provides low-interest federal loans for working capital to Colorado small businesses that have realized economic injury from COVID-19. Funding was appropriated through the US congressional Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. Small businesses, private non-profit organizations, small agricultural cooperatives and small aquaculture enterprises impacted by COVID-19 can seek federal loans to pay key needs such as fixed debts, payroll, and accounts payable.

Eligibility information, loan application links and emerging economic recovery resources can all be found at choosecolorado.com.

Expanding Health Care Workforce

This public health emergency will put enormous strain on our systems and our workforce, particularly for our health care workers. In order to scale up Colorado's health care workforce capacity, Governor Polis has:

- Asked the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies to cut through the red tape so that **medical professionals with licenses in other states can be licensed in CO** as quickly as possible.
- **Contracted nurses from out-of-state** to help with our communities that have been hit the hardest.
- **Authorized every EMT and paramedic in the state** to administer the test for COVID-19
- **Asked doctors and nurses who are not currently out of the workforce or retired to reconnect with their past employers** in the event we need surge capacity
- **Reached out to Anschutz Medical school** and asked to tap into their network of qualified nursing, medical professionals, pharmaceutical experts, and other graduate students to help conduct COVID-19 testing to help increase our capacity.

Emergency Actions To Date

On March 10, Gov. Polis declared a [state of emergency](#) in Colorado to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

Gov. Polis has since used emergency powers and the capacity of the administration to take additional steps to protect the health and safety of Coloradans -- especially our most vulnerable populations -- and minimize the economic impact of this crisis.

Here are the major actions the Polis Administration has taken so far:

- Instructed health insurance companies to **waive fees and costs associated with testing for coronavirus**,

- **Stood up drive-up coronavirus testing facilities** and work with private partners to expand the state's testing capacity,
- Ensured that workers in food service, hospitality, health care, child care, and education have **access to paid leave** so that they don't come into work sick, and access to **unemployment insurance** in the event that they become infected,
- Ensured that **state workers**, including those working in our 24-hour facilities, have the **flexibility to take time off if necessary** for testing, treatment, and recovery,
- **Restricted visitation to facilities** that serve our most vulnerable populations like older Coloradans and those with underlying health conditions to keep them safe,
- Established **guidelines for school, university, and child care facility closures** to protect children, parents, educators and staff.
- **Banned gatherings** of more than 10 people, and encouraged Coloradans to follow CDC guidelines for social distancing.
- Ordered the closure of **downhill ski areas** for one week, from March 15-22.
- Advised **visitors and residents of Eagle, Summit, Pitkin, and Gunnison counties** -- areas with high community spread -- to minimize contact with others and self-isolate.
- Ordered the **closure of bars, restaurants, breweries, coffee houses, food courts** and other establishments that serve food or beverages -- which may remain open for takeout, delivery, and room service -- as well as other congregation spaces such as gyms, casinos, and performance spaces. And updated the order to include the **closure of personal services including hair or nail salons, spas, or tattoo or massage parlors**.
- **Closed Department of Motor Vehicles facilities and taxpayer service centers to the public**; many services will be available over the phone and online, and processes and operations will continue behind the scenes.
- **Spearheaded the #DoingMyPartCO campaign** to spread awareness about the need for social distancing to stop the spread of coronavirus in communities.
- **Applied** for a Medicaid 1115 waiver from the federal government to enroll uninsured patients who are impacted by coronavirus and ensure continuity of coverage and services for Medicaid and CHP+ members.
- **Applied** for an Appendix K waiver to protect against limits on services and cut red tape for long term care, I/DD and other HCBS patients.
- **Secured** a statewide disaster declaration through the Small Business Administration (SBA) for federal funding in order to provide relief for Colorado's small businesses dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.
- **Worked** with providers to expand telemedicine capacity to delay elective surgeries
- **Launched** HelpColoradoNow.org, the State of Colorado's COVID-19 volunteer response effort,
- **Launched** the Colorado COVID-19 Relief Fund to marshal private funds to pay for prevention, impact, and recovery
- **Established** a system of emergency child care for emergency workers so that they can have peace of mind that their children are safe and being cared for while they are heroically engaging with the crisis at hand.
- **Temporarily suspended** elective surgeries and procedures to preserve important medical equipment, like personal protective equipment and ventilators, needed to combat COVID-19.
- **Directed** the Secretary of State's Office to limit in-person contact regarding elections and operations in the Secretary of State's Office. This includes the suspension of any in-person filings of forms, statements, applications or any other documents.
- **Ordered** the emergency regulation that establishes a special enrollment period (SEP) for uninsured Coloradans to get health insurance. Coloradans who lose their job, or who may lose their job in the coming weeks, and thus lose their employer-based health insurance will be allowed to enroll in individual health insurance plans.

Best Practices

The best thing you can do right now is encourage your family and friends to stay home. This will help reduce the spread. Also, practice good hygiene and social distancing in order to keep yourself and others safe -- especially vulnerable populations like older Coloradans and those with underlying health conditions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- Practice social distancing from others -- at least six feet apart.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick and keep your children home if they are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- If someone at your home is sick, avoid sharing dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.
- Choose a separate room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy. Identify a separate bathroom for the sick person to use, if possible. Plan to clean these rooms as needed when someone is sick. All of these ways of preventing the spread of COVID 19 are also effective in preventing the transmission of the flu or seasonal colds. Smart hygiene practices make us all healthier.

Thank you for spreading the word to your organizations and networks. These are difficult times, but we will get through them together, and we will emerge stronger.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or needs from our office. My cell phone is 210-385-7556. Stay safe, everyone!

Thanks,
Analysse

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