

March 17, 2020

"#COVID19 UPDATES: We've received 89 new positive test results since yesterday, bringing our statewide total to 267.

Today is Day One of life in New Jersey under the aggressive social distancing measures we put in place yesterday to #FlattenTheCurve. I thank everyone who is taking these measures to heart, and urge others to follow their lead. If there is no reason to be out, don't go out.

I have sent a letter to Donald J. Trump requesting the assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in constructing temporary hospitals to ensure our greater regional preparedness and help alleviate the strain on our hospitals.

We understand that county and local governments are focused on their own concerns. We ask these officials to coordinate closely with us prior to making any local directive.

Effective 8:00 PM tonight, I'm directing the closure of all indoor retail shopping malls, amusement parks, and amusement centers across New Jersey until the current emergency ends. Restaurants which are located within malls, and which also have their own entrances separate from the general mall entrances, may remain open for takeout or delivery only.

Outside of our restrictions on malls, restaurants and bars, and other businesses specifically ordered to shut down - all other non-essential retail, recreational, and entertainment businesses may remain open until 8:00 PM daily if they abide by social distancing guidelines.

Help is available for residents who are out of work as a direct result of this emergency. Workers whose place of employment has closed, or whose hours have been cut, as a result of #COVID19 are, in all likelihood, eligible to receive either full or partial unemployment insurance.

We're asking the federal government for assistance in ensuring that every unemployment insurance application is properly received and handled.

We have among the nation's strongest paid sick leave and expanded paid family leave laws.

I urge every resident whose job has been directly impacted to visit nj.gov/labor for comprehensive info from New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

We know that anxiety is high among New Jersey business owners - particularly, among our small businesses which are the backbone of our economy. Our entire economic team is working alongside the U.S. Small Business Administration to ensure that available financial relief can flow into New Jersey as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Our full application was submitted this morning, and we're pushing for swift approval. We're also working to ensure continuity of operations for ongoing construction projects.

We're working with the Legislature in the hopes of standing up a state business-assistance program within the coming week.

I encourage banks, particularly the local and regional lenders who are deeply embedded in their communities, to do the right thing and work directly with their small business clients to defer loan payments, or to open up credit lines for critical working capital whenever possible.

I also urge banks to do what they can for their mortgage customers to make loan repayment much more flexible in the coming weeks and months. This is particularly truly for works in the hardest hit sectors, who work by-the-hour, or those in the gig economy.

I thank every business – large and small – doing the right and keeping their employees on payroll. We implore every business owner, to every degree possible, to follow their model and continue paying worker.

The emergency response bill currently moving through Congress would provide employees with significant sick-leave and paid family benefits. Not paying employees now might keep them from taking advantage of these.

We're working nonstop to ensure that we are on a strong footing to protect our economy and people's jobs, so we can emerge stronger once this emergency is over.

To all residents – I urge you to be vigilant against scammers trying to profit from this emergency. If you receive a call from a scammer or suspect price gouging, please report it to the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs at (973) 504-6240 or at www.njconsumeraffairs.gov

I know this is a time of heightened anxiety. But, we are New Jerseyans. We've proven, time and time again, that we are the most resilient people you can find anywhere.

If all nine million of us do our part, we will get through this.

We will get through this as one New Jersey family, stronger than ever.”