



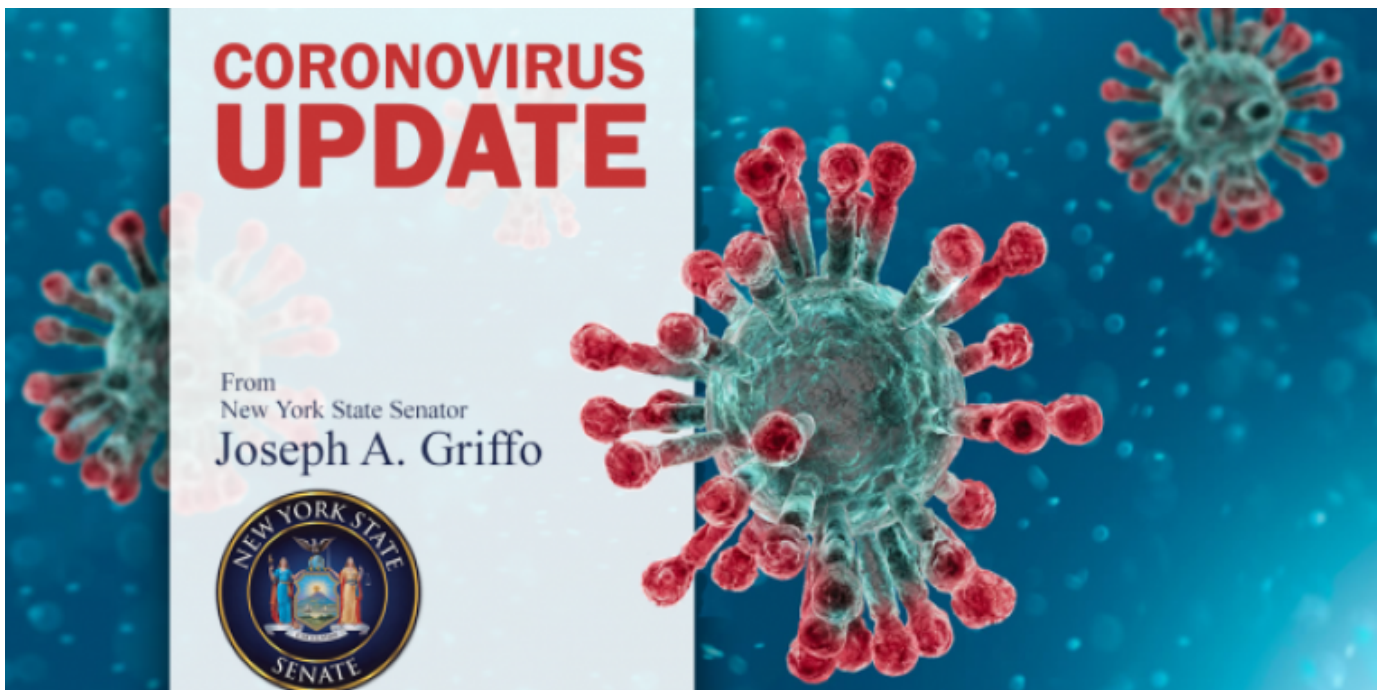
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Sen. Griffo's COVID-19 Update

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 15, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS UPDATES**



There are a number of new directives coming down from the President, Governor and local governments that will affect all New Yorkers.

The following is information collected from various government entities, agencies and the media.

Please keep in mind that this is an ever-changing situation, and we will do our best to provide updates when able to help keep you informed.

**In New York State (as of 9 a.m., April 18, 2020):**

- Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor announced on April 6, 2020, that all NYS on Pause functions will be extended. Schools and nonessential businesses will stay closed through May 15th.
- The Governor issued executive orders [202.17](#) and [202.18](#) requiring all people in New York to wear masks or face coverings in public, including when taking public or private transportation or riding in for-hire vehicles. The orders went into effect Friday, April 17, 2020.
- On Friday, April 17, 2020, the Governor issued an executive order directing all NYS public and private labs to coordinate with DOH to prioritize diagnostic testing.
- On Wednesday, April 15, 2020, the Governor announced he will issue an Executive Order requiring all people in New York to wear a mask or a face covering when out in public and in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained, such as on public transportation. The Executive Order will go into effect on Friday, April 17th.
- On Wednesday, April 15, 2020, the Governor announced he will issue an Executive Order requiring nursing homes to report positive COVID-19 cases and deaths to the families of those who are living in the nursing home facility within 24 hours. The order will include adult home and other assisted living facilities. Previously, State Department of Health issued guidance asking these facilities to communicate this information to families; this new order makes that guidance mandatory.
- On Monday, April 13, 2020, New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf,

Delaware Governor John Carney and Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo announced the creation of a multi-state council to restore the economy and get people back to work. This announcement builds on the states' ongoing regional approach to combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. The coordinating group - comprised of one health expert, one economic development expert and the respective Chief of Staff from each state -- will work together to develop a fully integrated regional framework to gradually lift the states' stay at home orders while minimizing the risk of increased spread of the virus. The council will create this framework using every tool available to accomplish the goal of easing social isolation without triggering renewed spread - including testing, contact tracing, treatment and social distancing - and will rely on the best available scientific, statistical, social and economic information to manage and evaluate those tools.

- An Executive Order will direct employers to provide essential workers with masks free of charge to wear when interacting with the public.
- An additional \$200 million in emergency food assistance will be available for low-income households enrolled in SNAP.
- On Friday, April 10, 2020, the Governor announced an additional \$200 million in emergency food assistance will be available for more than 700,000 low-income households enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Those enrolled in SNAP and not yet receiving the maximum benefit will receive an additional payment to bring them up to this amount in March and April. The supplemental benefits will be issued in April and delivered directly to recipients' existing Electronic Benefit Transfer accounts. Households eligible for the supplement that live in counties outside of New York City will begin receiving the supplemental emergency benefit starting on April 13, and all eligible households will have received it by April 24. In New York City, the emergency benefits will be issued starting on April 14, and the issuance completed on April 25.

- The Governor is working with New York's Congressional delegation to create a COVID-19 Heroes Compensation Fund to support health care and other frontline workers and their families who contracted COVID-19.
- \$600 in additional weekly unemployment benefits will be made available to all New Yorkers; and the period covered by unemployment benefits is being extended for another 13 weeks, for total of 39 weeks.
- NYS is investing in private companies to bring rapid testing to scale: interested businesses should contact Empire State Development at 212-803-3100 or COVID19Supplies@esd.ny.gov.
- On April 7, 2020, the Governor announced an agreement with the largest student loan servicers in New York to obtain relief for student loan borrowers experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 who contact their private student loan servicer. Available relief includes 90 days of deferred monthly payments, waived late fees, no negative reporting to credit agencies, and enrolling eligible borrowers in available long-term assistance program. The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, only provides relief to borrowers whose loans are owned by the federal government. This agreement with the student loan industry provides much-needed relief to these outstanding borrowers whose loans are privately owned.
- The State Education Department announced the cancellation of the June 2020 administration of Regents Exams and today released guidance on modifications to requirements for students to graduate and earn their high school diplomas, credentials and endorsements. Info [here](#).
- On Monday, April 6, 2020, the Governor announced the state is increasing the maximum fine for violations of the state's social distancing protocol from \$500 to \$1,000 to help address the lack of adherence to social distancing protocols. The Governor reminded

localities that they have the authority to enforce the protocols.

- On Monday, April 6, 2020, the Governor announced the creation of the First Responders Fund to assist COVID-19 health care workers and first responders with expenses and costs, including child care. The State Department of Health is accepting donations for the fund, and Blackstone is making an anchor \$10 million contribution to the fund. Donations can be made electronically at <https://www.healthresearch.org/donation-form/> or by check sent to below address. Donors should specify the donation is for "COVID-19 NYSEmergency Response."
- On Monday, April 6, 2020, the Governor announced that the state is partnering with Headspace, a global leader in mindfulness and meditation, to offer free meditation and mindfulness content for all New Yorkers as a mental health resource for residents coping with the unprecedented public health crisis. New Yorkers can access a collection of science-backed, evidence-based guided meditations, along with at-home mindful workouts, sleep and kids content to help address rising stress and anxiety at [www.headspace.com/ny](http://www.headspace.com/ny).
- On Saturday, April 4, 2020, the Governor announced that he will issue an executive order allowing medical students who are slated to graduate to begin practicing.
- On Friday, April 3, 2020, the Governor announced that he will issue an Executive Order allowing the state to redistribute ventilators and personal protective equipment, or PPE, from institutions that don't currently need them and redeploy the equipment to other hospitals with the highest need. The National Guard will be used to transport the ventilators and PPE across the state. The equipment will be returned to the hospital or the hospital will be reimbursed for the equipment in the future.
- On Friday, April 3, 2020, the Governor announced the launch of [www.ny.gov/covid-19tracker](http://www.ny.gov/covid-19tracker), which will provide New York State's comprehensive coronavirus testing data to

the public. The website, which will be updated daily with the latest data, presents visualizations of statewide and county-level testing and results. The public can also access the testing data through Open NY at [data.ny.gov](https://data.ny.gov), New York State's open data portal, which offers machine readable datasets in downloadable standard formats that can be sorted, searched, analyzed and applied to new uses.

- According to the state Department of Taxation and Finance, New York State personal income tax and corporation tax returns originally due on April 15, 2020, have been extended to July 15, 2020. In addition, all related tax payments due on April 15, 2020, may be deferred to July 15, 2020, without penalties and interest, regardless of the amount owed. Additional guidance for individuals, fiduciaries and corporations can be found here: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/notices/n20-2.pdf>
- Governor Cuomo has directed the state nonessential workforce to continue to work from home for an additional two weeks through April 15th.
- On Sunday, March 29, 2020, the Governor announced that pharmacies have agreed to offer free home delivery to help reduce long lines for prescriptions at their facilities.
- On Sunday, March 29, 2020, the Governor announced in-person workforce restrictions, which have been implemented through various Executive Orders —202.3 (restaurants and bars, gyms, fitness centers, movie theaters and casinos); 202.4 (local government workforces, school districts; village elections); 202.5 (malls, public amusement facilities); 202.6 (all non-essential reduce 50%); 202.7 (barber shops, salons, other personal care); 202.8 (DMV); 202.10 (non-essential gatherings of any size); 202.11 (extension of school district closure until April 15, 2020) — are extended until April 15, 2020 to enable uniform extension and review of such restrictions, and any such restrictions may be extended by future executive orders.

- On Saturday, March 28, 2020, the Governor announced that the presidential primary election will move from April 28 to June 23rd, aligning it with the congressional and legislative primaries in New York.
- On Saturday, March 28, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued an executive order to enable the tax filing deadline for personal and corporate taxes to be pushed back to July 15. The Federal government took similar action earlier this month.
- On Friday, March 27, 2020, the Governor also announced that for a 90 day period, consumers experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 may defer paying life insurance premiums. No late fees will be assessed and no negative data will be reported to credit bureaus during this time, and late payments will be payable over a one-year period. LICONY, or the Life Insurance Council of New York, which represents over 80 percent of the life insurance industry, has agreed to these measures.
- On Friday, March 27, 2020, the Governor announced that, for a 60 day period, consumers and small businesses experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 may defer paying premiums for property and casualty insurance, including auto, homeowners, renters, workers comp, medical malpractice, livery and taxi. No late fees will be assessed and no negative data will be reported to credit bureaus during this time, and late payments will be payable over a one-year period. New Yorkers who are without health insurance should apply now through NY State of Health. If you lost employer coverage, you must apply within 60 days of losing that coverage. Because of a loss of income, New Yorkers may also be eligible for Medicaid, the Essential Plan or Child Health Plus.
- All campgrounds, cabins, and cottages at state parks are CLOSED to overnight visitation through April 30. All visitors with reservations will be issued a full refund. We ask for your patience as refunds are processed. New York State also has suspended all new camping, cabin and cottage reservations for the 2020 season until further notice. The situation is

being assessed on a daily basis. If you've made a reservation for the season beginning May 1 and it is determined that your campground is safe to open, your reservation will be honored. However, visitors who wish to cancel an existing reservation may do so and receive a full refund.

- New Yorkers can call the COVID-19 Emotional Support Hotline at 1-844-863-9314 for mental health counseling.
- The Governor announced that the state will mandate that all hospitals must cancel all elective, non-critical surgeries to help expand hospital capacity - effective Wednesday, March 25th.
- If you have questions about COVID-19, you can submit a question by visiting <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/form/ask-us-a-question>.
- All licenses, non-Driver IDs, and registrations with an expiration date of March 1, 2020 or later will be extended. All DMV Offices are closed and road tests are suspended until further notice. All reservations have been cancelled. You can still do most transactions online.
- The Thruway Authority has announced emergency tolling procedures are in place for cash collection on the Thruway until further notice. Beginning March 22 at approximately 8 p.m., non-E-ZPass customers will not receive a toll ticket on entry, and will be asked to provide license plate information when they exit the Thruway, without paying cash. They will receive a bill in the mail approximately 30 days after travel which they can pay with credit card, through the steps below. More info [here](#).
- The Governor announced he is enacting Matilda's Law to protect New Yorkers age 70+ and those with compromised immune systems. The measure requires this group of New Yorkers to stay home and limit home visitation to immediate family members or close friends in need of emergency assistance. If it is necessary to visit such individuals, the



visitor should get prescreened by taking temperature and seeing if person is exhibiting other flu-like symptoms. Both individuals should wear a mask for the duration of the visit.

- The Department of Labor is implementing a new more efficient filing system based on the first letter of the applicant's last name (alphabetical order). More info [here](#).
- The state Education Department (NYSED) is suspending all NYS Elementary- and Intermediate-Level State Assessments for the remainder of the school year in response to the statewide closures of schools and districts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. More info [here](#).
- The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has issued a new directive to New York State mortgage servicers to provide 90-day mortgage relief to mortgage borrowers impacted by the novel coronavirus. The directive includes waiving mortgage payments based on financial hardship; no negative reporting to credit bureaus; grace period for loan modification; no late payment fees or online payment fees; and postponing or suspending foreclosures.
- The Governor has asked DFS to instruct state chartered banks to waive ATM fees, late fees, overdraft fees and fees for credits cards.
- The Legislature has passed and the Governor has signed legislation that provides for paid sick leave for those affected by COVID-19. The bill provides for
  - Employers with 10 or fewer employees and a net income less than \$1 million will provide job protection for the duration of the quarantine order and guarantee their workers access to Paid Family Leave and disability benefits (short-term disability) for the period of quarantine including wage replacement for their salaries up to \$150,000.

- Employers with 11-99 employees and employers with 10 or fewer employees and a net income greater than \$1 million will provide at least 5 days of paid sick leave, job protection for the duration of the quarantine order, and guarantee their workers access to Paid Family Leave and disability benefits (short-term disability) for the period of quarantine including wage replacement for their salaries up to \$150,000.
- Employers with 100 or more employees, as well as all public employers (regardless of number of employees), will provide at least 14 days of paid sick leave and guarantee job protection for the duration of the quarantine order.
  
- All indoor portions of retail shopping malls, amusement parks and bowling alleys will temporarily close effective 8 p.m., Thursday, March 19, 2020.
- Restaurants and bars will close for on premise service and move to take-out and delivery services only. These establishments will be provided a waiver for carryout alcohol.
- The state Liquor Authority has provided the following guidance to restaurants and businesses regarding the sale of alcohol. More info [here](#).
- Those affected by the temporary closure of these businesses may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits. You can find more information [here](#).
- Movie theaters, gyms and casinos will temporarily close to encourage social distancing.
- All New York State Department of Motor Vehicle offices move to an appointment only format for now, requiring drivers to pre-schedule appointments online rather than just walking into their local office. It's one of many crowd reduction efforts to reduce COVID-19 infections. More information [here](#).
- Village elections delayed statewide until the April 28 primary election.
- New York State will waive all fees for state, local and county parks.

**At the federal level (as of 9 a.m., April 18, 2020):**

- [Government Response to Coronavirus, COVID-19](#) (info on what various agencies and departments within the federal government are doing during the coronavirus pandemic)
- [U.S. Army places temporary hold on new recruits to basic training](#)
- [Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission](#)
- The deadline for REAL ID enforcement has been postponed to October 1, 2021. Info [here](#).
- [Trump officials advise people leaving New York City to self-quarantine for 14 days](#)
- [Trump Administration Says U.S. Border With Mexico To Close To Nonessential Travel](#)
- The income tax filing deadline will be moved from April 15 to July 15.
- The President will invoke the [Defense Production Act](#), which grants the authority to allow the President to direct industry to produce critical equipment.
- Beginning 3/18/20, 2020 Census field operations will be suspended for two weeks until April 1, 2020. Info [here](#).
- [President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed into law a coronavirus relief package that includes provisions for free testing for Covid-19 and paid emergency leave.](#)
- The Trump administration has suggested limiting gatherings to 10 people or less.
- The administration also has suggested several other guidelines. More information [here](#).
- Interest on federal student loans will be waived until further notice.
- The Small Business Administration will work directly with state Governors to provide targeted, low-interest loans to small businesses and non-profits that have been severely impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan

program provides small businesses with working capital loans of up to \$2 million that can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. More info [here](#).

- Federal officials and congressional representatives are trying to negotiate a stimulus package to combat the impacts of the coronavirus.
- Medicare has temporarily expanded its coverage of telehealth services to respond to the current Public Health Emergency. These services expand the current telehealth covered services, to help you have access from more places (including your home), with a wider range of communication tools (including smartphones), to interact with a range of providers (such as doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, and licensed clinical social worker). More info [here](#).
- For more information on what the federal government is doing, please visit [here](#).

**In Oneida County (as of 9 a.m., April 18, 2020):**

- As of 12 p.m., April 18, 2020, there are 263 positive cases: 25 patients are hospitalized in Oneida County and nine admitted outside of Oneida County. Six total fatalities. 1,829 total tests have been conducted: 180 results pending; 1,386 negative results; 443 under mandatory quarantine; 430 under precautionary quarantine; 1,885 have been discharged from mandatory and precautionary quarantine.
- [Oneida County talking to Rite Aid about COVID-19 test site](#)
- On Monday, April 6, 2020, the county, in conjunction with Sheriff Robert Maciol and District Attorney Scott McNamara, announced that enforcement of essential businesses violating gathering and social distancing guidelines will begin immediately. A special

sheriff's detail will be investigating those who have been reported. A formal warning will be issued to offenders and the next offense will result in a \$1,000 fine and possible revocation of health permit and liquor license for bars/restaurants. On April 7, 2020, enforcement of Oneida County businesses violating gathering and social distancing orders began. To anonymously report a violator contact Mohawk Valley Crime Stoppers: Call tips in to hotline: 1-866-730-8477; submit tips to website: [www.mohawkvalleycrimestoppers.com](http://www.mohawkvalleycrimestoppers.com); or submit tips through app: p3tips

- On Monday, April 6, 2020, the county announced that, effective immediately, all visitors to county facilities must wear a mask covering their mouth and nose while in the building.
- Oneida County Government also has added a dashboard to the COVID-19 section of the Oneida County website (<https://ocgov.net/health/coronavirus>). The dashboard can be found [here](#).
- All camp grounds and cabin colonies in Oneida County, as defined by New York State sanitary code, will be closed effective April 1, 2020 and will remain closed until July 1, 2020. Any camp ground or cabin colony which has camping cabins, camping units, camp sites or camp grounds currently occupied, must ensure each is vacated by 5 p.m. on April 12, 2020.
- Construction projects deemed essential by the state include MVHS Hospital in Utica, Cree Mohawk Valley Fab in Marcy, Orgill Inc. Distribution Center in Rome, Cold Point Manufacturing Facility in Rome, Open Innovation Campus Project at Griffiss International Airport in Rome and SkyDome indoor UAS Testing Facility at Griffiss International Airport in Rome. While the Nexus Sports Complex in Utica has not been deemed an essential construction project by the state, Oneida County has sought a waiver to designate it as such.
- The Oneida County Mental Health Hotline will go live at 8:30 a.m. Friday, March 27. The number to call will be 1-800-678-0888. This Oneida County effort is being coordinated by

Upstate Caring Partners. It will provide access to mental health professionals who can guide residents through mental distress that can arise during these times. So far, participating agencies include ICAN, Catholic Charities, Rescue Mission, Center for Family Life & Recovery and Neighborhood Center. More are expected to join.

- The county's first informational video is available on the COVID-19 section of our Oneida County website (<https://ocgov.net/health/coronavirus>) It offers activities youth and families can partake in while adhering to social distancing. By the end of the week there will be mental health and public health videos available and others are in the works. You can also now find senior shopping hours for local businesses and the Sheriff's Office check list for children home alone on the site.
- Effective Tuesday March 24, 2020, Centro will temporarily waive the requirement to pay a fare for bus services in all locations until further notice. This includes Call-A-Bus services. In addition, on all of its buses with rear doors, Centro will require passengers to enter and exit through the rear doors. Exceptions will be made for individuals who request the bus kneel in order to board, or for persons using mobility devices. Syracuse and Utica Transit Hubs and Centro Call Center to close until further notice starting Monday, March 23, 2020. Buses, including CALL-A-BUS service still operating.
- Remote testing sites at MVHS and Rome Hospital will be suspended at end of March 23, 2020. Limited supply of resources which will be prioritized for the critically ill hospitalized patients and healthcare workers. MVHS and Rome Memorial Hospital will be calling physicians that have orders for testing already in. The county will contact those providers whose orders haven't gone through the hospital process for testing yet, and directed to contact the healthcare facilities for direction. Testing for outpatients is not being encouraged. Testing does not change the clinical management of the patient.

- The Oneida County Department of Family and Community Services has established a help line at 315-798-5439 to assist families with issues that may arise as a result of COVID-19 closings or restrictions including daycare, emergency assistance and aging and chronic care services. It will be in operation every day from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- A volunteer database is being assembled for those interested in helping to support our vulnerable populations. Please email [volunteer@ocgov.net](mailto:volunteer@ocgov.net) to help.
- Face-to-face interviews for all DFCS services will be limited. The majority of service requests are now being managed through phone interviews and utilization of email, mail or fax. Because of this, time periods for compliance are being extended.
- All Intervention and Preschool Related Services will be suspended effective 5 p.m. on March 20, 2020 until further notice. If your child has services scheduled for this week, please notify your provider immediately if someone in the home is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- All senior centers are closed. Meals will continue to be delivered weekly opposed to daily.
- To better protect patients, medical staff and employees, visitor restrictions have been put in place at the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) community sites due to Coronavirus. This includes all medical group offices, laboratory locations and dialysis sites. More info [here](#).
- Out of an abundance of caution, Rome Memorial Hospital is suspending all routine visitation, 7 a.m. Wednesday, March 18th, 2020, to ensure the safety of patients, residents and staff. In addition, the hospital will be reducing the number of entry points on its campus. More information [here](#).

**In Lewis County (as of 9 a.m., April 18, 2020):**

- There are currently 10 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lewis County, according to the county's health department. More info [here](#).
- [Lewis organizations push initiative to 'Reboot' county businesses](#)
- [Public access to the county courthouse and public safety building. Appointments are required for services from the Weights and Measures; Recreation, Parks and Forestry; Planning; Youth Bureau; Board of Elections; and Real Property/Tax departments.](#)
- The Lewis County Health System has opened a resource triage line to increase COVID-19-related resources available to the public. The phone line will be available 24/7, is staffed by a registered nurse and is for NON-EMERGENCY CALLS. The number is 315-376-9678. More info [here](#).
- The health system also has opened a Call First Clinic, which will be open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The clinic will see patients with fever, cough or flu-like symptoms by appointment only. If a patient arrives at the clinic who has not set up an appointment through the hotline 315-376-9678, they will be directed to a designated parking space where they will be asked to register by phone.
- Immunization clinics on Tuesdays from 9-10:30 are canceled until further notice due to the COVID-19 response. If you are in need of a flu vaccine or immunization, please call us at (315) 376-5453.
- Lewis County General Hospital has implemented visitor restrictions. More info [here](#).
- Additional information about Lewis County's response can be found [here](#).

**In St. Lawrence County (as of 9 a.m., April 18, 2020):**



- THERE ARE CURRENTLY 106 CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 IN ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY. [MORE HERE.](#)
- [St. Lawrence Health has established testing centers in county](#)
- [St. Lawrence Health System has set up COVID-19 hotline](#)
- [Potsdam village offers new loan to small businesses](#)
- [St. Lawrence County Sheriff issues travel restrictions](#)
- [The U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Buffalo Field Office has announced the temporary closure of small boat reporting locations and reminds travelers that routine small vessel travel for pleasure is non-essential.](#)
- [St. Lawrence County arraignments to be virtual](#)
- [St. Lawrence County launches sheriff's dept. app, opens emergency operations center](#)
- A number of County facilities are now closed to the public: St. Lawrence County Court House; St. Lawrence County Public Safety Complex; St. Lawrence County Human Services Center; St. Lawrence County DMV Offices; St. Lawrence County Surrogate Building; and all nutrition sites.
- [Massena sets up Emergency Operations Center](#)
- Massena Electric Department will suspend disconnect activities until at least April 30, 2020. Regular billing practices will continue during this time. On-line bill payment at [www.massenaelectric.com](http://www.massenaelectric.com). The Massena Electric Department will temporarily waive all fees for using this on-line bill pay for payments made until April 30, 2020. More info [here](#).
- [The health department recommends county residents use social distancing in all daily activities.](#)
- Standardized visitor limitations at Canton-Potsdam Hospital, Gouverneur Hospital, and Massena Hospital. More info [here](#).

**If you have questions about COVID-19, you can call the following phone numbers or visit the following websites:**

- New York State Department of Health: 1-888-364-3065 or [here](#).
- Oneida County Health Department: 315-798-5431 (general information), 315-798-5439 (for those experiencing coronavirus and closure-related emergencies between 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily) or [here](#).
- Lewis County Public Health: 315-376-5453, 315-376-9678 (COVID-19 general information hotline) or [here](#).
- St. Lawrence County COVID-19 Call Center: 315-229-3970 or email [eocallcenter@stlawco.org](mailto:eocallcenter@stlawco.org). The COVID-19 Call Center is open daily between 8am and 4pm at this time. The St. Lawrence County Public Health Department can be found [here](#).
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)