



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Staying Safe—and Informed—During Uncertain Times

PATTY RITCHIE March 20, 2020



If you're reading this, odds are your world has been at least somewhat turned upside down by COVID-19, also known as the "Coronavirus." During these unprecedented times, things are changing rapidly and now, more than ever, it's important to band together to protect our health, the health of our loved ones and the health of all New Yorkers.

On a personal level, there are steps you can take to stop the spread of Coronavirus. As this situation continues, I encourage you to follow the below guidelines to help "flatten the curve:"

- Even if you feel healthy, please try to stay at home as much as possible;
- In public, practice “social distancing” by keeping a 6-foot distance from others;
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds—especially after being in a public place and after you have coughed or sneezed;
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol;
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze. After doing so, immediately wash your hands;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Take extra care to avoid exposing the elderly and those with underlying health conditions to illness. Instead of visiting them, call; and
- Be sure to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, including doorknobs, light switches, countertops, phones, keyboards, toilets, tables, handles, faucets, etc.

On my website, I've put together a long list of resources to help people in our region through this pandemic. I encourage you to [visit and obtain information](#) on help available in the following categories:

- Health resources, including key health care phone numbers and websites, a regularly updated list of testing sites and more;
- Labor, small business and financial resources, including information on how to file for unemployment, assistance available via the Small Business Administration, mortgage relief, etc.; and

- Community support including details on food banks, food provided to students by school districts and childcare.

Should you know of a resource that's not listed on my website but should be, I ask that you email me details at ritchie@nysenate.gov. I encourage you to visit my website frequently, as I will be adding new information and resources daily.

These are trying times, but by being smart and taking proper precautions, we will make it through. We will not do it alone though—and I would like to take this opportunity to extend my most sincere thanks to those who are working on the front lines during this pandemic. They include our doctors, nurses, emergency responders and other health care personnel, as well as people working around the clock to make sure we have the necessities—including grocery store employees, pharmacists and drug store workers, truck drivers and other essential workers. I'd also like to thank the health care workers who have come out of retirement to assist and college medical students who have stepped up to help deal with this pandemic. Next time you see one of these heroes, I encourage you to express your gratitude.