



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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COVID-19 Presents Challenges, But Help is Available

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The Coronavirus presents unprecedented health, economic and personal challenges for all of us. The global pandemic has impacted virtually every facet of life...work, school, health care, commerce and recreation. New York remains on "pause" through at least May 15, meaning our daily routines are anything but. We all look forward to the day when our lives return to normal, but it is important to remember that help is available to those who need it.

This is first and foremost a health crisis. Tens of thousands of our fellow New Yorkers have tested positive for COVID-19, and while most have or will recover, thousands have lost their

lives to this terrible virus, including dozens in Western New York. These are not just numbers, but real people with family and friends who are grieving their loss. Our thoughts go out to all of them.

It is important to remember that if you have health related questions about Coronavirus, you can contact the NYS Department of Health at 1-888-364-3065 or visit its website at www.health.ny.gov.

If you or a loved one are struggling with stress, anxiety or depression associated with self-isolation or other uncertainties, it is important to know you are not alone. The state has established a hotline for those in need of emotional support and mental health assistance. Trained professionals are available 24/7 at 1-844-863-9314.

In recent weeks there has also been a disturbing increase in domestic violence calls. No one should have to stay in a dangerous situation, even now, and help is available through a just unveiled state hotline at 1-800-942-6906. They can help you relocate and find safe shelter.

The pandemic is also having a devastating impact on our economy. Over the past month, more than 1-million New Yorkers have filed for unemployment as businesses have been forced to close or scale back. The State Department of Labor has been overwhelmed and continues to work on the backlog of outstanding applications. My office stands ready to help where possible. You can reach our district office at 656-8544.

If you are a small business, independent contractor or self-employed, loans are available to help with payroll and other expenses. Information is available through the Small Business Administration at www.sba.gov.

Finally, if you are among the thousands of essential employees working in health care, emergency services, law enforcement, farming, food delivery, grocery stores, pharmacies and

other critical services...thank you. We salute your service and recognize your sacrifice. One of the greatest needs for these men and women is child care, especially now that schools are closed. The Child Care Resource Network and Erie County Emergency Child Care Task Force might be able to help. Information is available at www.wnychildren.org/essential-workers.

By working together and supporting one another, our community, our nation and our world will overcome this challenge. Please stay safe.