



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 15, 2020

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Allegheny County Calls Upon Non-Essential Business to Close Voluntarily *Additional Social Distancing Measures to Slow the Spread of COVID-19*

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Health Director Dr. Debra Bogen today released a video statement to the community regarding concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic in this region. In it, they called upon non-essential businesses in Allegheny County to close or implement alternative work strategies for at least 14 days – beginning tomorrow – to limit the spread of the virus through personal contact and surfaces.

“This is an unprecedented challenge that our community is facing,” said Fitzgerald. “This is an unprecedented time in our community. Our region has always been at its best when we work together, and this challenge is no exception. We need everyone to step up and play a part in slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our region. We understand that this may cause hardship for some, and frustration for others, but it’s imperative that we work together to do what’s best for our community.”

As has been reported, there are now four confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Allegheny County. As testing increases drastically in the coming days, the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) expects that many more cases will be identified.

“There is still much unknown about this virus and the illness it causes. But there are some things we know already,” said Bogen. “We know the virus is or will soon be spreading in virtually every community in the US and indeed in the world. Given the contagiousness of this virus, we know that it will not slow down **on its own** until it has infected most people in every community. The best hope we have for averting this catastrophic outcome is to take aggressive action to dramatically slow down the spread of the virus in our community.”

The goal with this recommendation is to further emphasize social distancing. Of particular concern are those areas where people congregate together. Specific locations that would fall under this recommendation include:

- child care centers
- senior centers
- community and recreation centers
- gyms – including yoga, spin, barre and other similar facilities
- hair salons, nail salons and spas
- casinos

- bars
- concert venues
- theaters
- sporting event facilities
- golf clubs
- social clubs
- non-essential retail facilities including shopping malls (except for pharmacy or other health care facilities located therein)

While restaurants are included in this recommendation, businesses are encouraged to stay open for carry-out and delivery only. Churches and other religious institutions are asked to refrain from social gatherings but should remain open for social services and support of their communities. Gatherings should be of 20 people or less during this time.

This recommendation does not impact supermarkets, pharmacies, and gas stations.

People are still free to travel. For healthy people, this simply means making certain that they are practicing social distancing by staying at least six feet away from other people. It also means using good judgement – people that work in smaller group settings can certainly continue to work, provided that there is space to remain separated from each other.

People who are ill should not go out. They should not go to grocery stores, but instead have food delivered or ask friends or family to pick up what they need. They should remain semi-isolated so as not to further spread any virus or disease. If they need to seek further medical care, they should contact their medical provider by phone and, if an emergency, contact 9-1-1.

“We fully recognize the impact that these recommendations will have on our community – their livelihoods, their mental health, their day-to-day needs. We are working collaboratively to put the systems in place that can meet those challenges,” said Fitzgerald. “We will also be calling on those of you who are healthy and able to assist those of our community who are not. We hope to have additional announcements regarding those plans in the coming days.”

Allegheny County will continue to communicate with the public as more information is gathered. For the latest information on COVID-19, visit www.alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus. If you are not yet a subscriber to Allegheny Alerts, we encourage you to create an account at www.alleghenycounty.us/alerts and to subscribe for COVID-19 alerts under the categories of Health Department/Health & Environment. ACHD provides a daily update at 11 a.m. via Allegheny Alerts and additional notifications as information becomes available.

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