

From: [Vin Gopal](#)
To: [@\[\]](#); [Gingerelli, Antoinette](#)
Bcc: [@\[\]](#)
Subject: Fwd: New Jersey COVID-19 Update - March 23, 2020
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 7:10:05 PM

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Thanks,

Vin

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Senator Vin Gopal & Assembly Members Eric Houghtaling and Joann Downey**
<[@\[\]](#)>
Date: Mon, Mar 23, 2020 at 5:18 PM
Subject: New Jersey COVID-19 Update - March 23, 2020
To: <[\[\]@\[\]](#)>

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Vin Gopal

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Monday, March 23, 2020

Dear Friend,

Here's our latest update on New Jersey's response to COVID-19 and further actions our state is taking to keep our communities safe. If you have any specific questions regarding COVID-19 or New Jersey's response, please submit them using our [Question Submission Form](#), and we will do our best to get back to you.

Sincerely,



New Website

Governor Phil Murphy announced the launch of the [New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub](#), a new, visitor-friendly website available at covid19.nj.gov.

The New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub provides New Jerseyans with the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the State's response, including information about services such as food assistance and small business assistance.

The New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub includes a COVID-19 Symptom Checker, so New Jerseyans can receive tailored advice depending on their

symptoms, including information about testing. It will also increase the State's ability to analyze the spread of COVID-19.

The New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub is accessible via mobile phone and for those with disabilities. All the content is easily searchable via Google and other search engines so the information can be found widely and consistently.

[Click Here to Visit the COVID-19 Information Hub](#)

Unemployment Update



The state announced new rules for New Jersey residents seeking to file for [unemployment benefits](#). See the graphic above for more information.

Stay at Home Order & Closure of Businesses

Governor Murphy signed an executive order implementing a "stay at home" order throughout New Jersey. Under this order, all residents are to stay at home or at their place of residence unless they are leaving for the following reasons:

- Obtaining goods or services from essential retail businesses;
- Obtaining takeout or food beverages from restaurants;
- Seeking medical attention, essential social services, or assistance from law enforcement;
- Visiting family or close friends, caretakers, or romantic partners;
- Reporting to or performing their job;
- Walking, running, or engaging in outdoor activities with immediate family, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners;
- Leaving for an educational, religious, or political reason;
- Leaving because of a reasonable fear for health or safety; or
- Leaving at the direction of law enforcement or other government agency.

Governor Murphy's executive order further directs the closure of all non-essential retail businesses to the public, with the exceptions of:

- Grocery stores, farmer's markets and farms that sell directly to customers, and other food stores, including retailers that offer a varied assortment of foods comparable to what exists at a grocery store;
- Pharmacies and medical marijuana dispensaries;
- Medical supply stores;
- Gas stations;
- Convenience stores;
- Ancillary stores within healthcare facilities;
- Hardware and home improvement stores;
- Banks and other financial institutions;
- Laundromats and dry-cleaning services;
- Stores that principally sell supplies for children under five years;

Pet stores;

- Liquor stores;
- Car dealerships, but only for auto maintenance and repair, and auto mechanics;
- Printing and office supply shops;
- Mail and delivery stores.

If you discover a business remaining open or violating another of Governor Murphy's executive orders, you can call 1-800-222-1222 or call 2-1-1 or text "NJ COVID" to 898211.

Volunteers Needed

Fulfill, Food Bank of Monmouth & Ocean Counties



Fulfill is working hard to get food and supplies to vulnerable Monmouth County families, but they can't do it alone. If you can volunteer to pack Crisis Relief Boxes for Fulfill, email xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx. Thank you to everyone who's able to help!

Red Cross Blood Shortage



The American Red Cross is working to continue delivering its mission, including the collection of lifesaving blood, but they have had a staggering number of scheduled Red Cross blood drives cancelled as more workplaces, college campuses and other venues send people home and encourage social distancing. Disruptions to blood donations can lead to shortages and cause delays in essential medical care.

To learn more about hosting a blood drive for patients in need, please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org). If you know of a site where the Red Cross can host a blood drive, please contact 646-784-4824.

Those who are healthy, feeling well and eligible to give blood or platelets, are urged to make an appointment to donate as soon as possible by using the Red

Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Latest Updates

Public Health

As of today, we had 935 new positive COVID-19 cases, bringing our total to 2,844. A total county breakdown can be found at the [COVID-19 dashboard](#).

Governor Phil Murphy announced the opening of a COVID-19 Community-Based Testing Site at Bergen Community College in Paramus. The drive-thru testing center will be open seven days per week, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. In order to be eligible for testing, individuals must be current New Jersey residents and experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness. Priority will be given to symptomatic individuals experiencing cough, fever (99.6F or above) and shortness of breath.

The Murphy Administration required hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to [waive patient fees](#) for testing and related diagnostic services for those who lack health insurance.

Consumer Information

The US Department of Education announced that all borrowers with federally held student loans will automatically [have their interest rates set to 0%](#) for a period of at least 60 days. In addition, each of these borrowers will have the option to suspend their payments for at least two months to allow them greater flexibility during the national emergency.

The Governor imposed a moratorium on removing individuals from their homes pursuant to an eviction or foreclosure proceeding. Evictions and foreclosure filings can still take place (but cannot be executed until the moratorium is lifted), so residents are advised to still pay what they can. If you foresee any problems with paying, contact our office so that we can forward you to the appropriate resources.

All public utilities and regulated entities shall immediately cease any in-home or business visits unless there is an immediate risk to health and safety.

The IRS [extended the 2020 federal tax filing deadline](#) to July 15.

The Department of Banking and Insurance launched a [COVID-19 website](#), including a [health insurance FAQ page](#) with information on health insurance.

Business Information

The U.S. Small Business Administration opened up access to the SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program to New Jersey businesses hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Click [here](#) for more details regarding the SBA loan program.

All door-to-door sales activity by third-party suppliers or other sales persons selling energy or energy related products (for example: residential solar, community solar, or energy efficiency offerings) are to be suspended immediately

Broadband internet providers may continue to connect new customers or repair existing service for homes with school age children, those who need internet access to meet job requirements, or other priority customers, as defined by each company, provided that such visits should only be done as a last resort after utilizing hotspots, self-install kits, and like measures to minimize in-home visits.

Public Services

The US Department of Education announced that it will [waive standardized test requirements](#) for states affected by the virus. States must apply for the exemption.

Governor Murphy announced the [mandatory closure of all state, county and municipal libraries](#). The order also includes all libraries and computer labs at private and public colleges and universities.

NJ TRANSIT is now running special weekday service. The North Jersey Coast

Line special weekday schedule may be found on [NJ TRANSIT's website](#).

Click [here](#) to see all updates from previous COVID-19 briefings.

Legislative Action

On Saturday, the following bills from the Legislature addressing the COVID-19 pandemic were signed into law:

[A-3095/S-1982](#) – Provides county clerks with additional week to mail ballots for 2020 primary election; requires ballot position draw to occur one day early if statutory date falls on holiday

[A-3840/S-2281](#) – Requires school districts to provide school meals or meal vouchers to students eligible for free and reduced price school meals during school closures due to COVID-19 epidemic

[A-3843/S-2283](#) – Requires health insurance and Medicaid coverage for testing of coronavirus disease 2019 and for telemedicine and telehealth during coronavirus disease 2019 state of emergency

[A-3849/S-2302](#) – Modifies deadline by which public agency is required to respond to request for government record during period of emergency

[A-3850/S-2294](#) – Allows public bodies to conduct meetings, and provide notice, by electronic means during periods of emergency

[A-3851/S-2295](#) – Permits extension of deadlines for adoption of county and municipal budgets under certain circumstances

[A-3854/S-2286](#) – Authorizes all licensed health care facilities and laboratories to collect specimens to test for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19); allows waiver of staffing ratio requirements

[A-3855/S-2287](#) – Requires food access information be displayed on websites of 2-1-1 system and executive branch departments during public health

emergencies to the extent practicable

[A-3861/S-2290](#) – Permits corporations to hold shareholders' meetings in part or solely by means of remote communication during state of emergency

[A-3865/S-2291](#) – Limits return of items purchased from retail food stores under certain circumstances

[AJR-158/SJR-77](#) – Urges FCC to take temporary measures to secure broadband access for those affected by COVID-19

If you have any questions regarding these laws or any other legislation that has been passed or should be passed to address the COVID-19 pandemic, we encourage you to submit them through our [Question Submission Form](#).

Submit Your Questions

We are looking to compile a list of answers to common questions from residents regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and our state's response to it. We are also glad to answer any questions you might have regarding government programs and services that can assist you, your finances, your business, or your family during this difficult time.

To receive an answer, please [submit your question and contact information](#), and we will do our best to get back to you as soon as we can.

[Click Here to Submit a Question](#)

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