

Dear Rotarians,

Since we e-mailed you last, so much has changed already with the requirements for large gatherings or events and the closure of in-restaurant seating and bars. At a national level, there is an expectation that there will soon be adequate tests available and accessible locations for people that need to be tested.

Also, take time to thank any family members, friends, or neighbors that are on the front lines in public health, hospitals, nursing homes, home health, hospice, dialysis, or clinics. Think of creative ideas to help them as most likely they will be working long hours planning and caring for our patients, families, and communities. Suggestions to help might include preparing a hot meal; watching their children or caring for their adult parents; running errands for them; etc.

New updates include:

### ***COVID-19 Emergency Declaration***

The President declared the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia. The Emergency Declaration issued on Friday, March 13, allows for current laws to be waived such as no charge for COVID-19 testing or treatment; and ability of providers to operate outside of some regulations to address emergency situations with COVID-19 <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid19-emergency-declaration-health-care-providers-fact-sheet.pdf>

### ***Increasing Guidance on Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events***

The President and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provided guidance on Monday afternoon, March 16, that recommended for the next 15 days, organizers (whether groups or individual) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of more than 10 people throughout the U.S. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html> The “President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America” provides guidance on the next 15 days of social distancing to flatten the coronavirus occurrence curve. At the same time, Illinois Governor lowered the number of people gathering from 250 to 50 for in-person events.

### ***Actions by States***

While there is commonality among some states in some of their regulations to protect their populations, there are also many variations. In Illinois, schools, in-person dining at restaurants, bars, are all shut down for the next two weeks. Schools can provide students with virtual classes or written assignments. Restaurants can provide take out and curbside meal pickups but no inside restaurant meals can be served. State agency staff, to the extent possible, are working from home. Almost all entertainment, museums, professional and college sports, and park districts are shut down so as to limit large gatherings of people.

### ***What to Do If You Think You Have COVID-19***

If someone thinks they have COVID-19 and are having symptoms such as fever and dry cough, they should contact their primary care provider or clinic by phone, e-mail, or their electronic portal. Their provider or clinic will provide them with instructions on next steps. If a person with COVID-19 just shows up at a provider or clinic setting, they can readily transmit the COVID-19 virus to everyone in the waiting room.

If someone thinks they have COVID-19 and are in a high risk category such as being elderly with chronic diseases, such as cardiac, respiratory, diabetes, etc. or have a compromised immune system, have them contact their primary care provider or clinic for next steps.

If someone has the COVID-19 symptoms of fever and cough and are experiencing difficulty breathing or having shortness of breath; act quickly and contact their primary care provider, clinic, or hospital and the providers will provide them with instructions as to where to go immediately. Many hospitals have established special entrance ways for patients with COVID-19 so that other patients without COVID-19 infection do not get exposed.

Please remember that there is no vaccine to protect anyone from COVID-19 and antibiotics don't work on a viral disease. There are some promising medication interventions being tested by the FDA, but as of now, there is no medication treatment.

### ***Protecting Our Nursing Home Residents***

In order to protect nursing home residents, on March 13, CMS immediately restricted all visitors and non-essential health care personnel from entering nursing homes, with the exception of individuals undergoing compassionate care (end of life, etc.). However, visitors for compassionate care must make arrangements with the nursing home in advance and follow proper hand hygiene and wear personal protective equipment. No one with a sore throat or the COVID-19 symptoms will be allowed to visit. Additionally, CMS issued guidance for continuous assessment of residents, staff, compassionate visitors, and surveyors for COVID-19 symptoms. Nursing homes must also cancel communal dining and all group activities, such as internal and external group activities. For detailed information, click here

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-14-nh-revised.pdf>

Many nursing homes are being creative in supporting the needs of the residents to talk with loved ones and are setting up conference calls, videos, facetime, and other ways for residents and families to interact.

### ***Why Social Distancing is Tied to Flattening the COVID-19 Curve***

An in-depth analysis by Tomas Pueyo of what has transpired with COVID-19 in other countries and how the flattening of the curve is the only approach to saving lives. Viewed by over 28 million people and in 26 different languages. “*Coronavirus: Why You Must Act Now Politicians, Community Leaders and Business Leaders: What Should You Do and When?*”

<https://medium.com/@tomaspueyo/coronavirus-act-today-or-people-will-die-f4d3d9cd99ca>

### ***International Perspective***

As many people are also involved in international relations and issues, a helpful way of keeping up with the incidence of COVID-19, is through an interactive website developed by Johns Hopkins University and Medicine's Coronavirus Resource Center.

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

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