Governor Carney Launches Public Education Campaign with Beach Towns as Delaware Beaches Reopen

Effort aims to raise awareness on beach restrictions, individual responsibility in COVID-19 mitigation, ahead of Memorial Day Weekend and summer season

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Friday launched the "Summer Safely" public education campaign in partnership with the beach towns, local Chambers of Commerce, the Delaware Tourism Office, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH), and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS).

The public education effort seeks to reinforce the restrictions on the Delaware beaches and to encourage Delawareans to take the proper steps to mitigate COVID-19 as we head into the summer season. Governor Carney lifted State of Delaware restrictions that limited access for only walking and exercise starting at 5:00 p.m. today, May 22, ahead of the Memorial Day weekend.

The key messages of the "Summer Safely" initiative are:

- Practice social distancing. Stay 6 feet apart.
- Wear a face covering in public places.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently.
- Stay home if you're sick.

"We look forward to welcoming Delawareans back at the beach this weekend, but we all need to take basic precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19," said **Governor Carney**. "Wear a face covering in public settings. Keep your distance from others. Wash or sanitize your hands frequently. I know it's unusual, but we know that's the best way to prevent transmission of the disease. Now's not the time to let up."

The campaign will begin on Friday with metal signage at entryways to the beaches, stickers on takeout containers, and decals on windows of retailers. Promotional tactics will expand as the summer progresses.

A team of Beach Ambassadors in "Summer Safely" t-shirts will also greet beachgoers starting this Friday to educate Delawareans about the proper ways to mitigate coronavirus and point individuals to resources when they seek additional information. The team of Beach Ambassadors have been trained by the Division of Public Health and the Delaware Tourism Office on how to address questions and the resources to provide members of the public. Beach Ambassadors also will use and distribute hand sanitizer produced by Painted Stave Distilling in Smyrna.

"For many, travel will be different this year. As we enter this season, we join with state and local leaders to remind everyone to summer safely and hope Delawareans will use this opportunity to rediscover the landscapes and tourism businesses in their own backyards," said **Liz Keller, Delaware Tourism Director**. "The beaches are part of what makes Delaware such a

special place to live in and travel to. We also look forward to welcoming back out-of-state visitors when it is once again safe to do so."

"As Health Secretary I know it's important for people to spend time outside for physical activity as a way to bolster both our physical and emotional health," said **Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker**, a practicing family physician. "While we know that the risk for transmission of the virus does decrease when we are outdoors, we must remain vigilant about maintaining social distancing, wearing a face covering if we can't stay 6 feet away from others, washing our hands and using hand sanitizer as often as possible, and coughing and sneezing into our face covering or our elbow. To keep the beaches open, we all need to help prevent flare-ups of COVID-19 by protecting ourselves and others."

"We know the importance of getting outdoors, to stay active and healthy, maybe now more than ever," said **DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin**. "Our beaches within Delaware State Parks can be a space for Delawareans to safely enjoy the outdoors – to swim, boat, fish, kayak and more – but only if everyone follows the public health requirements to avoid groups and practice social distancing. We'll do our part to monitor the number of visitors to our parks, but we also urge Delawareans to take this time to explore our less-traveled parks, trails and spaces."

"The Association of Coastal Towns membership has worked cooperatively with Governor Carney, State officials and local leaders to ensure a consistent message is relayed to our residents and visitors this coming summer season," said **Association of Coastal Towns Chairman Gene Langan**. "The message being conveyed is to come enjoy Delaware's beautiful beaches and do so safely. We are looking forward to an improving health situation in Delaware and welcoming back visitors to all of our beaches."

"All of our businesses are ready to once again open their doors and get back to business," said the **Association of Chambers of Commerce in Delaware.** "As the Chambers of Commerce in Delaware, we ask everyone in the state, residents and visitors, to do their part so that we can all get back to business as normal and all enjoy shopping locally."

"Small Businesses and tourism are the lifeblood of our state, and Painted Stave Distilling is very pleased to be able to help get our state beaches open through the beach ambassador program," said **Mike Rasmussen, Co-owner Painted Stave Distilling**. "COVID-19 has forced many small businesses to shift how we do business, and we are glad that we have been able to produce something needed to stay safe by so many businesses and citizens in our state."

For additional details about Delaware's economic reopening, visit de.gov/economy.

Anyone with a question about COVID-19, should call Delaware 2-1-1, or email delaware211@uwde.org. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Medical-related questions related to testing, symptoms, and health-related guidance can also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

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