Press Releases

Governor, Dr. Alexander-Scott Provide Updates on State's Response to COVID-19

Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) provided updates on Rhode Island's response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) today.

The Governor began outlining her vision for safely reopening Rhode Island's economy. For weeks, a team of experts on the Governor's "New Normal" workstream have been exploring how and when this process can begin. To guide these decisions, the Governor announced today a series of indicators that measure the state's readiness to reopen. The six key indicators are as follows:

• Has the rate of spread continued to decrease? • Does the state have the capacity to quickly identify community spread on an ongoing basis before a major outbreak occurs? • Does the state have necessary supports in place for vulnerable populations, and for anyone in quarantine? • Does Rhode Island's healthcare system have the capacity and the PPE to handle future surges? • Do businesses, schools, child care facilities, faith leaders, and recreational spaces have plans for long-term social distancing? • Is the state prepared to reimpose measures, or reclose certain sectors of the economy, if it becomes necessary?

The Governor also announced that the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recently granted Rhode Island the authority to issue Pandemic-EBT benefits (P-EBT) to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and non-SNAP households with one or more children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced price meals at school due to COVID-19 school closures. For households receiving SNAP benefits, the additional benefits will be added to their existing EBT cards. Households not currently receiving SNAP benefits will receive a new P-EBT card in the mail with benefits automatically added and a personal identification number (PIN) and setup instructions. More information can be found here.

were in their 90s. All five of these people lived in congregate living settings. Rhode Island's number of COVID-19 associated fatalities is now 155. A full data summary for Rhode Island is posted online (see link below).

Key messages for the public • Anyone who is sick should stay home and self-isolate (unless going out for testing or healthcare). • The people who live with that person and who have been in direct close contact with that person should self-quarantine for 14 days after the last day that that person was in isolation. Direct close contact means being within approximately 6 feet of a person for a prolonged period. • Help is available for people living in quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19. Visit www.RIDelivers.com for connections to groceries, home supplies, restaurants, and mutual aid groups. People can also call 2-1-1. • When people are in public, they should wear a cloth face covering. A cloth face covering is a material that covers the nose and mouth. It could be sewn by hand or improvised from household items such as scarves, T-shirts, or bandanas. • Groups of more than five people should not be gathering. Always avoid close personal contact with other people in public. • Healthcare workers should not be going to work if they are sick (even with mild symptoms). • People who think they have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider. Do not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling a healthcare provider (unless you are experiencing a medical emergency). • People with general, non-medical questions about COVID-19 can visit www.health.ri.gov/covid, write to RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov, or call 401-222-8022. This is the COVID-19 Hotline that RIDOH has available to the public. • Everyone can help stop the spread of viruses in Rhode Island. o Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same. o Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. o Cough or sneeze into your elbow. o Stay home and do not leave your house if you are sick, unless it is for emergency medical care. o Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

Related links

Rhode Island Commerce's COVID-19 Page (https://ri-department-of-health-covid-19-data-rihealth.hub.arcgis.com/)

Department or agency: Department of Health
Online: http://www.health.ri.gov (http://www.health.ri.gov)
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