Press Releases

Raimondo Declares State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19, Announces New Supports for Employers, Employees, and Nursing Homes

PROVIDENCE, R.I.- Governor Gina M. Raimondo today signed a declaration creating a State of Emergency in Rhode Island, allowing the State to access additional resources to supplement its robust response to COVID-19. In addition, today the Governor, Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT), and Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) announced a series of new COVID-19 preparedness and response measures to support employers, employees, and nursing homes throughout the state.

DLT is filing an emergency regulation to expand access to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)/Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) programs to better serve Rhode Islanders impacted by COVID-19. The emergency regulations will:

-Waive the seven-day waiting period for regular unemployment insurance claims and claims filed under the short-term compensation program (WorkShare).

-Waive the seven-day minimum amount of time that claimants must be out of work to qualify for TDI/TCI benefits.

-Waive the required medical certification for individuals under quarantine (and allow them, instead, to temporarily qualify via self-attestation that they were under quarantine as a result of COVID-19).

In addition, Governor Raimondo and Director of Health Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH announced a number of measures to keep nursing home residents safe. The aim of these measures is to keep sick people out of nursing homes, and to limit the possibility that a resident will contract COVID-19 while outside and bring that virus into the facility.

19 transmission."

Nursing homes are now:

-Limiting when visitors can enter,

-Not admitting visitors who are younger than 18 years of age,

-Only allowing residents to leave for medical appointments, and

-Actively screening visitors, staff, vendors, entertainers, and anyone else who enters for illness and recent travel history. (People who are ill or have traveled internationally in the last 14 days will not be allowed to visit.)

In special circumstances, exceptions can be made from this policy, given the importance of mental and emotional health to the overall wellness of older adults. Families should work with nursing home administrators regarding special circumstances. RIDOH is partnering with Rhode Island's Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Kathy Heren, in supporting nursing homes.

Data updates

These data will be updated regularly online:

-Number of Rhode Island COVID-19 positive (including presumptive positive) cases: 3

-Number of people who had negative test results at RIDOH's State Health Laboratories: 53

-Number of people for whom tests are pending: 6

-Number of people who are currently instructed to self-quarantine in Rhode Island because they had direct contact with a person with COVID-19: approximately 290

Testing in Rhode Island is being done at RIDOH's State Health Laboratories. Confirmatory testing is being done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Positive results are considered 'presumptive' if they still need to be confirmed by the CDC.

General guidance

-If you have traveled anywhere internationally (or anywhere overnight in the U.S.) in the last 14 days, monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms include fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

-Whenever possible, avoid close personal contact with people in public. When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs. Additional guidance is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

-Although Rhode Island has the testing capacity it needs, people without symptoms should not be tested for COVID-19. Testing individuals with no symptoms is not recommended by CDC.

-People who think they have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider. These people should not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling a healthcare provider (unless they are experiencing a medical emergency). Healthcare providers have a dedicated number that they are then using to consult with RIDOH on potential COVID-19 cases.

-Early data suggest that older adults are twice as likely to experience serious COVID-19 illness. RIDOH is reiterating CDC's guidance for people older than 60 years of age:

*Avoid close contact with people who are sick. *Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home. *Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor. *More information is available from CDC.

-People with general 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. (After hours people are being directed to call 211.)

-Everyone can help stop the spread of viruses in Rhode Island.

*Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same. *Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel. *Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands. *Stay home from work or school if you are sick. *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way. *Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.

Related links

COVID-19 Disease Data (https://health.ri.gov/data/covid-19/)
People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html)

Department or agency: Office of the Governor

Online: http://www.governor.ri.gov (http://www.governor.ri.gov)

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