Press Releases

COVID-19 Announcements Made on Surge Locations, Face Covers, and Other Topics

Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) made several coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) announcements today.

- Surge locations: Rhode Island is setting up surge sites to provide hospital-level care at the Rhode Island Convention Center, the former Citizens Bank building on Sockanosset Cross Road in Cranston, and the former Lowe's building at Quonset. Once complete, these sites will be staffed and equipped with the medical resources needed to treat more than 1,000 people.

- Cloth Face Covers: Dr. Alexander-Scott encouraged Rhode Islanders to consider wearing cloth face covers when in public. A cloth face cover is a material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps, or wrapped around the lower face. A cloth face cover could be sewn by hand or improvised from household items such as scarves or T-shirts. (Face covers are different than N95 facemasks. People in the general public should not be purchasing or hording medical grade masks, such as N95s.) The primary role of a cloth face cover is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes. Cloth face covers are not substitutes for physical distancing, washing your hands, and staying home when ill.

- Childcare: The state will continue to suspend childcare licenses through the month of April.

- Mental Health: The Governor announced the establishment of a $5 million COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation. The funding is made available by local insurance companies as a result of a state compliance review and will be dedicated to fund nonprofit organizations working to address Rhode Islanders' behavioral health needs resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. Nonprofits who think they can help with these services can apply for funding through the Rhode Island Foundation beginning April 6. Adults seeking mental or behavioral health support should call BH Link at 414-LINK. For services for children, call Kids Link 855-543-5465.

testing in Rhode Island had previously been limited to the members of certain priority populations who are more vulnerable to complications from COVID-19 or who are members of Rhode Island's critical infrastructure workforce.

COVID-19 Data Update Dr. Alexander-Scott announced today that Rhode Island has 54 new cases of COVID-19. This brings Rhode Island's count to 711. Dr. Alexander-Scott also announced two additional COVID-19 associated fatalities. One of these individuals was a nursing home resident. That brings Rhode Island's number of fatalities to 14. A full data summary for Rhode Island is posted online: https://health.ri.gov/data/covid-19/

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. 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.

- 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.

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 hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Cough or sneeze into your elbow.

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