FILED
MAR 12 2020
CLERK SUPREME COURT

**In the Iowa Supreme Court**

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| **In the Matter of Preparation for Coronavirus/COVID-19 Impact on Court Services** | ) ) ) | **Order** |

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The Iowa Judicial Branch is carefully monitoring the situation regarding the spread of the novel coronavirus/COVID-19. In addition, the Governor's Office and the Iowa Department of Public Health have urged Iowans to prepare for its impact "in the same way they prepare for severe weather or other events that could disrupt their normal routine."

Preparation is key to minimizing coronavirus/COVID-19 impact on the services the judicial branch provides Iowans. The following procedures should be followed to protect parties, attorneys, court personnel, jurors, and the many other Iowans who regularly conduct business in or visit Iowa's 100 courthouses:

1) **Notify.** An attorney or party must promptly notify opposing counsel and the respective Clerk of Court's Office if they reasonably suspect that a participant in any scheduled hearing, trial, conference, deposition, or other proceeding may have an elevated risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Guidance on who is considered to have an elevated risk can be found on the websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (https://www.cdc.gov/), the Iowa Department of Public Health (https://idph.iowa.gov/) and the Iowa Judicial Branch (www.iowaccourts.gov).
2) **Inquire.** To the extent possible, counsel must affirmatively inquire of their clients and witnesses whether they have an elevated risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

3) **No in-person attendance.** No person who has an elevated risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may personally attend any hearing, trial, conference, deposition, or other proceeding without prior authorization from the court.

4) **Jurors.** Potential jurors must notify the jury manager if they have an elevated risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The jury manager must reschedule potential jurors with an elevated risk to a new term of service.

5) **Remote proceedings.** The court may conduct conferences and hearings using video or phone conferencing when it believes it would be practical and efficient to do so and will promptly consider any request by parties to change an in-person proceeding to a remote proceeding.

6) **Continued efforts.** Chief Judges and District Court Administrators will continue to work with State Court Administration on plans to develop mitigating measures to address the effects of the coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak on their respective courts. **All such efforts must be consistent with keeping courts open to the fullest possible extent while protecting public safety by mitigating the impact of coronavirus/COVID-19.**

7) **Update.** As circumstances change, this order may be updated.

Dated this 12th day of March, 2020.

THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA

By

Susan Christensen, Chief Justice