Press Releases

Eviction Processing Suspended During Crisis, Rhode Islanders Encouraged to Report Price Gouging

Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Director of Health Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH today made several important announcements about the state's response to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

- Evictions: State courts will not process any residential or commercial evictions for the next thirty days. Payment and filing deadlines have also been extended past April 17. Public housing residents with questions can contact Rhode Island Legal Services at 274.2652 x123. Tenants in private rental housing can call the Rhode Island Center for Justice at 401-491-1101.

- Price Gouging: Rhode Islanders who suspect price gouging or COVID-19 scams should contact the Attorney General's Office. Price gouging is illegal in Rhode Island. Businesses are prohibited from increasing the price of any essential commodity to an "unconscionably high price" immediately before or during a declared state of emergency. Rhode Islanders who notice price gouging or scams should contact the Attorney General's consumer protection team at (401) 274-4400 or fill out an online complaint. (https://riag.wufoo.com/forms/q1851amb1bdd4d5)

- Donations of Supplies: Over the last several days, organizations have contacted the State about laboratory supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) that they would like to donate. Rhode Island has set up an online form to get information about these donations. People who have already contacted the State about donations are still encouraged to use this form: bit.ly/covid19-msd

Dr. Alexander-Scott announced today that Rhode Island has eleven additional cases of COVID-19. These people range in age from their 20s to their 60s. RIDOH is investigating their illness sources. This brings Rhode Island's case count to 44.

Data updates

Kent County: Fewer than 5

Newport County: 6

Providence County: 23

Washington County: 7

Number of people who had negative test results: 654

Number of people for whom tests are pending: 140

Number of people who are currently instructed to self-quarantine in Rhode Island: approximately 2,500

Key messages for the public

If you have traveled anywhere internationally in the last 14 days, self-quarantine for 14 days. That means do not go to work or school and stay at home.

Avoid all crowded places, large events, and mass gatherings. This is social distancing. However, people should continue doing essential errands (such as going to the grocery store).

Through March 30th, there will be no on-site food consumption for restaurants, bars, coffee shops, or other food establishments in Rhode Island. (Establishments with a food license can continue to conduct pick-up, drive-thru and delivery only.)

Due to the closure of schools, free "Grab and Go" meals are available (March 16th - March 20th) for children throughout Rhode Island. More information is available online.

Whenever possible, avoid close personal contact with people in public. When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs. Additional guidance is available from 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.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs.

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, 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. The Hotline will be staffed this weekend from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm both Saturday and Sunday. (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 hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

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.

Related links

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