Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Driver and Vehicle Services

Emergency Communication Networks

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Minnesota State Patrol

Office of Communications

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Pipeline Safety

Office of Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal

NEWS RELEASE

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SEOC UPDATE #3: State Agency COVID-19 Response Actions

ST. PAUL — Staff from state agencies and volunteer organizations continue working in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to keep Minnesotans safe and coordinate efforts to provide essential services and information during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SEOC was activated to support all state agencies with their COVID-19 response following Gov. Tim Walz's executive order issuing a Peacetime State of Emergency in response to the pandemic.

"The SEOC serves as single point of coordination for state government. We are focused on making sure we can continue to provide critical services to our citizens," said Joe Kelly, director of the Department of Public Safety's Homeland Security and Emergency Management division. "It takes a whole community to get through an incident like this, not just government. We need to all work together."

SEOC Activity

Representatives from all state agencies are staffing the SEOC either physically or virtually.

- The SEOC is focusing on inventorying personal protective equipment (PPE) for all state agencies, and procuring additional PPE to support health care workers and first responders across Minnesota.
- The Hotline continues to field questions regarding business and school closures and child care. Staff from the departments of Education and Human Services are answering calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at either 651-297-1304 or 800-657-3504.
    - The SEOC continues to support the public hotline and will increase its capabilities as needed.
    - The SEOC is working on phase two of the state hotline expansion.
- The SEOC continues to practice social distancing and all employees staffing the SEOC are being monitored as they enter the SEOC.

Here are today's updates and actions from state agencies and volunteer organizations:

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)

Global/National Update

- Worldwide: 246,275 cases and 10,038 deaths.
- U.S.: 14,250 cases (NY: 7,711 WA: 1,376 CA: 1,030 NJ: 742); 205 deaths (WA: 74, NY: 38, CA: 18).

Minnesota Update

- Total of 115 lab-confirmed cases in Minnesota – 26 confirmed March 19.
    - Since the start of the outbreak, eight COVID-19 patients in Minnesota have been hospitalized.
        - Five patients currently hospitalized, two of whom are in intensive care.
        - The rest of the patients are recovering at home.
    - Age range of cases: 17 to 94 years old; median age of 49.
    - This total of 115 reflects only the results from laboratory testing.
- MDH believes there are more cases in Minnesota, and that the virus is circulating in communities.
    - It is important for everyone to follow advice on community mitigation and social distancing to help flatten the case curve.
- 818 people tested on March 19
    - To date, MDH has tested nearly 4,000 total patients since PHL testing started March 1.

Outreach and Actions

- 1,578 calls to MDH public hotline March 19. The public hotline is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The number is 651-201-3920.
- More than 695,000 visits March 19 to the MDH COVID-19 website.
- New CDC online tool to help determine whether to stay home given symptoms, etc. Find it at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html.

American Red Cross Minnesota Region

The nation now faces a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Through March 19, nearly 5,000 Red Cross blood drives have been canceled across the country, resulting in more than 170,000 fewer blood donations.

- In the Minnesota and Dakotas region, 149 blood drives have been canceled, resulting in more than 5,020 fewer blood donations.
- Healthy and eligible individuals are needed now to donate to help patients counting on lifesaving blood. Donors centers remain open and added precautions are in place to ensure safety of donors and staff.
- The Red Cross Blood Donor App is the best way to schedule a blood donation appointment right now. To get it, text BLOODAPP to 90999 or search Red Cross Blood in your app store.

Minnesota Board of Animal Health

- The Board of Animal Health coordinated with the Department of Health and released a fact sheet for animal owners. Recommendations included:
    - Call your vet before you bring in your pet.
    - Ask a friend or family member to take care of your pets if you're ill with COVID-19.
    - Testing of animals for COVID-19 is not recommended at this time.
- This fact sheet and other guidance for veterinarians and animal owners can be found at www.mn.gov/bah/covid-19.

Minnesota Department of Commerce

The Minnesota Department of Commerce is releasing a consumer alert related to investment, bullion product and precious metal scams.

- The alert warns against scammers targeting consumers, specifically seniors and taking advantage of the fear, isolation and uncertainty of the situation due to COVID-19.
    - It offers a specific example of a company the FDIC is warning people about and their high-pressure tactics to defraud consumers;
    - It offers tips to consumers regarding some of the methods and signs of fraud and who they can contact for more information or help.

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI)

- Minnesota worker protections related to COVID-19 regarding sick leave, family medical leave, discrimination, reporting health concerns at work, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation are on DLI's website at https://www.dli.mn.gov/updates.
- DLI is providing guidance to municipalities about continuing inspection services and help to contractors who are having trouble getting inspections. Learn more: www.dli.mn.gov/inspections.
- View COVID-19 related resources, information from Minnesota OSHA Compliance at www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-novel-coronavirus-covid-19.
- All other agency updates related to COVID-19 are at www.dli.mn.gov/updates.

Minnesota Department of Military Affairs/Minnesota National Guard (MNNG)

- The Minnesota National Guard Joint Operations Center is running extended hour operations in support of COVID-19 supporting planning efforts and preparing for approved response requests.
- The MNNG is active in the State Emergency Management Office and supporting SEOC operations with liaison officer support using full-time personnel.
- The adjutant general has approved remote training opportunities for drilling guard members in order to adhere to CDC guidance on social distancing
- The Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) on March 19 picked up 1,000 masks for SFMD and Bureau of Criminal Apprehension use from Camp Ripley to support potential operations.

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS)

- DVS is addressing driver and vehicle services-related challenges Minnesotans are facing due to COVID-19. Visit the COVID-19 FAQ page for answers.

State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD)

- SFMD staff are checking with fire departments across the state to address resource needs.
- SFMD staff are touching base with State Emergency Response Teams to ensure they are ready to respond in an emergency.

State Patrol

Dispatchers in the State Patrol's two call centers (Roseville and Rochester) are helping guide COVID-19-related calls to the proper channels. A few things to know about how dispatchers are handling calls:

- Dispatchers are directing callers with COVID-19 questions to medical professionals or transferring callers to local dispatchers to seek direction from a medical resource. This is how State Patrol dispatchers would typically handle medical calls.
- To help keep first responders safe, dispatchers are asking illness-specific questions to help determine response resources.
- The State Patrol will continue monitoring Centers for Disease Control and Minnesota Department of Health and Department of Public Safety guidance to best keep the public and first responders safe.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

The Minnesota Veterans Homes are continuing a practice of infection control, similar to actions taken during past highly contagious periods for influenza and norovirus.

- We are temporarily revising guidelines related to admissions, leaves and passes. These changes reflect guidance provided by CDC and CMS and an aggressive strategy of containment and contagion control in our homes. These protect our vulnerable veterans and allow us to maintain the integrity of our mission to care for and protect the health of our veteran residents and staff.
- We will be restricting admissions in both our four Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) and our two Domiciliary (DOMS) locations. SNF admissions will be limited to veterans who have a critical need for support without the availability of care or resources to maintain their health and welfare for any reason. DOMS admissions will be limited to Veterans who have no emergency resources and are at imminent risk to life, health and welfare, including the homeless veteran.
- All new admissions will be carefully screened to avoid introducing any infectious diseases, including COVID-19, to the homes.
- In addition, resident leaves or passes will be postponed to limit exposure to the resident, other residents and staff who may be affected.
- For more information, talk to the home administrator.

MNsure

- MNsure announced a special enrollment period (SEP) for eligible uninsured Minnesotans in response to growing concerns over the spread of COVID-19 in Minnesota. This SEP begins on Monday, March 23 and runs through April 21.
- Individuals seeking coverage can visit MNsure.org starting Monday, March 23 to complete an application and enroll in coverage. Individuals must select a plan by April 21 for coverage beginning April 1. Plans selected by April 21 will have a retroactive coverage start date beginning April 1.
- Minnesotans who lose their employer-sponsored insurance due to layoffs may already qualify for an existing special enrollment period.
- Minnesotans who qualify for MinnesotaCare, Medical Assistance, or are a member of a federally recognized American Indian tribe can sign up at any time year round on MNsure.org.