



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48107-8645

March 12, 2020

To: All Washtenaw County Staff

From: Gregory Dill
Washtenaw County Administrator

Re: Continuity of County Operations
Coronavirus Crisis

Hello everyone,

Washtenaw County prides itself as an organization with a culture that cares – as employees, we look out for one another, and as service providers, we work to ensure the on-going well-being of all members of our community. We have cultivated a set of principles that help to make this organization one of the very best in the state, if not the entire country.

We are facing unprecedented times right now; the uncertainty of the Coronavirus has necessitated conversations and the implementation of contingency plans. My team and I are working closely with our elected leaders, our department heads, our community partners and most importantly, our health professionals to make decisions that are in the best interest of everyone involved. We are looking to other local governments and community organizations so we may provide the residents of Washtenaw County some consistency in our direction and help to manage their expectations. I am grateful for your understanding, your cooperation and for helping to prevent the spread of this virus.

The Administrative Cabinet (Administration, Legal, Risk Management, Labor Relations, HR, OIM, Finance, Equity and Communications) is meeting daily at 8am to discuss the current status of this situation, we are working to make the best decisions, based on the information we have. I am having regular conversations with Jimena and her team – and I vow to provide this organization an update that shares our plans and considerations by 3pm each day. Please keep in mind, this is an extremely fluid situation, so while we may say we're moving in one direction today, by the time the team meets tomorrow morning,

new information may necessitate an adjustment. I thank you in advance for trusting the judgment of our leadership and for understanding when those modifications happen. At a time like this, every decision made is in the interest of public safety and to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

Currently, the team is working on:

Continuity of County Operations:

We will be taking a staged approach to this crisis – based on current recommendations from our Health Department, the CDC, state and federal government. Members of my team have been assigned to specific departments and will be reaching out to help understand essential -v- mandated services and the staff assigned to each. As each of our business units provide different services with varying levels of customer interaction and reporting requirements, our recommendations may not be consistent throughout the organization. Of course, in some of our departments, while staff may not be mandated, they might be considered essential, based on the services provided. We will always follow all negotiated labor contracts and strive to provide our staff the maximum flexibility while maintaining serviceability levels to our community members.

Some considerations include:

- An equitable, modified work schedule, via reduced hours or staggered work hours
- A reduction in hours of operation (some departments)
- Options for those who may have school age children and experience day care challenges, should our public schools close for a period
- A moratorium on negative sick time balances (through the duration of Michigan's State of Emergency)
- The ability to work remotely- for those employees who qualify
 - For those individuals who may believe they qualify, please test that ability from your home as soon as possible – IT will be forwarding a separate communication on this process

We *will* be:

- Asking departments to educate their customers on the availability of their online services (if applicable) via updates to their websites, flyers on their doors, etc
- Requesting the Board of Commissioners earmark up to \$250,000 for emergency response purposes related to Coronavirus
- Placing an evolving FAQ page on eCentral
- Evaluating availability of county space for public health usage (staging community members, etc)

We are *asking* employees to contact Human Resources if:

- They have been diagnosed with a condition that results in a compromised immune system
- They have traveled out of the country in the past 14 days
- A family member has either been exposed to or is experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus

NOTE: By the close of business on Friday, March 13, Human Resources will be sending additional information on the management of employee leave time.

Public Meetings & Use of County Meeting Space:

Social distancing is recommended by health professionals. Effective immediately, and through April 6, regardless of the number of attendees, ALL public and private meetings utilizing any Washtenaw County meeting rooms or space are cancelled. Likewise, any county meetings scheduled to be held offsite must also be cancelled. If you are the coordinator of any of these meetings, please contact your attendees to advise. An option that may be utilized, if allowable by your bylaws or statute is to meet virtually, via Skype or another online meeting application. Office 365 is another resource that all county employees have available to them, and you can create 'Teams' and work collaboratively without holding meetings. If you are member of a group that believes their meeting could not/should not be cancelled, please email Corporation Counsel [Michelle Billard](mailto:Michelle.Billard@washtenaw.org) for further direction.

Currently, the leadership of the Board of Commissioners is evaluating the cancellation of next week's series of board meetings – that decision, as soon as it is made, will be included in my daily update.

Effective immediately, and through April 6:

- **ALL** non-essential travel is suspended, (conferences, seminars, training, etc), whether in or out of state
 - Affected staff are encouraged to work with their departmental leadership, conference organizers, airlines, hotels and attempt to secure refunds for any deposits or payments

Private Travel:

Spring break travel season is upon us. I'd ask that you follow the directive of our health professionals and continue to practice preventative measures. The safety and health of you and your family is paramount. If your travels take you overseas or to an area of the United States where Coronavirus has significantly impacted the population, please contact Human Resources prior to returning to work.

In Conclusion:

It is important to be deliberate in our actions as well as our reactions. Maintaining the confidence of our community members through sound decisions, directives and leadership will help us to navigate through this crisis and become stronger for having done so. I will continue to remind you that all information directly related to the Coronavirus will be shared by our Health Department – so please be sure to check their website frequently. None of us know how long this crisis will last, or how many members of our community it will affect, so at this time, I believe the staged approach offers the best flexibility to our staff and our customers. As always, if you have thoughts or creative solutions that would serve to prevent the spread of this virus while maintaining safety net services, I'd welcome the opportunity to discuss with you. My door, and my email, are always open.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners and myself, thank you, for your continued support –

Greg

Gregory Dill
Washtenaw County Administrator

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