



## **NEW CASTLE COUNTY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES PLAN TO RESPOND TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

### **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NEW CASTLE COUNTY (March 16, 2020)** – Today, New Castle County Council President, Karen Hartley-Nagle announced New Castle County Council’s Plan to respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. County Council is taking proactive steps to address the COVID-19 threat as the health and safety of New Castle Countians is our top priority.

On March 13, 2020, Governor John Carney declared a State of Emergency in Delaware to prepare for the spread of the Coronavirus. The Emergency declaration advises public gatherings of 100 or more are to be avoided to prevent community spread of Coronavirus.

In light of the developing coronavirus outbreak in New Castle County, County Council leadership in coordination with Counsel to Council, Clerk of Council and Committee Chairs are rescheduling all Committee and Council meetings set to be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 until Tuesday, March 31, 2020 in Council Chambers. This will allow the County Executive to present his Budget Address before County Council ahead of the April 1, 2020 deadline.

Additionally, in order to protect our staff and constituents from unnecessary exposure to the Coronavirus, staff will work remotely from home with no disruption in Council services to the citizens of the County – thanks to the advance preparation of our exceptional staff and IT team.

Since January of this year, we have witnessed the rapid spread of a virus named SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it caused named Coronavirus Disease 2019, abbreviated COVID-19. “Anxiety over the spread of this virus in our County is understandable. We are carefully monitoring the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and will follow the guidance of federal, state, and our local health authorities. The health and safety of our staff and the public is of the utmost consideration and importance during this pandemic,” said Council President Hartley-Nagle.

As this pandemic evolves, and more information becomes available over the next two-weeks, Council will adjust our plan as necessary. We are ready and legally authorized to conduct meetings electronically by telephone-conference or video-conference, putting health and safety during this emergency first.

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**Karen Hartley-Nagle, President**

New Castle County Council

Mobile: (302) 344-7828

Email: [karen.hartley-nagle@newcastlede.gov](mailto:karen.hartley-nagle@newcastlede.gov)

## ADVICE FROM DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DHSS advises, “Those at elevated risk for developing the disease is based on exposure due to travel to a country with a Level 2 Travel Alert or higher (China, Japan, Iran, Italy or South Korea) in the last 14 days or contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19, or older individuals (ages 65 and older) and those with chronic underlying health conditions.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are most similar to lower respiratory infections with patients having fever, cough, and shortness of breath. There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 infection at this time. While in some cases illnesses can be severe and require hospitalization, many individuals infected with COVID-19 recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids and taking pain, and fever-reducing medications.

Community spread is being detected in a growing number of places, including in the states of California, Washington and New York in the United States. More cases of COVID-19 are expected in the United States in the coming days, including more instances of community spread.

DPH advises older Delawareans and people with severe chronic health conditions to follow guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encouraging them to “avoid crowds as much as possible” to reduce their risk of contracting coronavirus disease. If you are in the higher-risk groups for getting very sick from COVID-19, the CDC recommends you should:

- Avoid non-essential travel such as long plane trips and defer all cruise trips worldwide.
- Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated space, as much as possible.
- When you go out in public, including to doctor appointments or dialysis, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Take everyday precaution to keep space between yourself and others.
- If an outbreak does occur, stay home as much as possible.
- Stock up on supplies, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, food and water, and other household items.
- Have a plan in the event you get sick, including discussing with household members, other relatives, and friends to discuss what you might need.

Older Delawareans, people with severe chronic health conditions and all other members of the public can call the Division of Public Health’s Coronavirus Call Center at 1-866- 408-1899 or TTY at 1-800-232-5460 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or email [DPHCall@delaware.gov](mailto:DPHCall@delaware.gov). For the latest on Delaware’s response, go to [de.gov/coronavirus](http://de.gov/coronavirus).

Delaware is experiencing a particularly serious flu season with 6,000 lab-confirmed cases and 11 deaths statewide, and in addition to getting your flu shot, DPH recommends everyday measures that people can take to prevent the spread of all infections, which would also slow the spread of coronavirus disease:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. If you use a tissue, dispose of it right away.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, including the backs of your hands and under your nails, for 20 seconds. Or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Clean commonly used surfaces such as computers, desktops, countertops cabinets, handles and more with disinfectant.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- If you are healthy, the CDC does not recommend buying or using face masks. You should only wear a mask if a health care provider tells you do so.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms (similar to the common cold) to people being severely ill and dying.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For more information, visit [de.gov/coronavirus](https://de.gov/coronavirus).

Persons with questions about coronavirus disease are encouraged to call the DPH coronavirus information line at 1-866-408-1899, TTY 1-800-232-5460, or email [DPHCall@delaware.gov](mailto:DPHCall@delaware.gov)”.