Dear Members,

“We are at war with an invisible enemy.” – Governor Mike DeWine
“Today is the day.” – Dr. Amy Acton

Today the State has issued a “Stay at Home” order that will take effect on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 11:59pm. Non-essential businesses are to close. Essential businesses must follow safe employee practices. Here is a link to all the State’s orders to this point, including today.

Stay at Home Order Issued/Non-Essential Businesses to Close
Here is the complete stay at home order as issued by the State. I’ve read it, it’s pretty easy to understand. Please take some time to read it fully to know your responsibilities. (Please understand the website has crashed several times, so please keep trying.) It’s important to note that there are exceptions to this order. Here is an FAQ that shares highlights.

If you have a business that is deemed essential – it is still imperative that you follow the previously issued proper protocols such as physical distancing, handwashing, taking temperatures, sending home sick employees, etc. See this checklist.

I also want to note, the Governor was clear - you will still be able to seek medical help, go get necessary supplies, go outside for exercise (no playgrounds), take care of other people, or go to work in an essential role. (A more thorough description of all of these is in the order). You do not need to over buy supplies, in fact when that happens, we all lose. Banks will remain open – most have gone to drive-thru and/or lobby by appointment, call your bank for more details.

Daycare Changes
Starting Thursday, daycares must operate under a temporary pandemic childcare license and follow additional protocols. I am currently aware of 1 local place that has announced that they have received this license (when you hear of more let me know): Step by Step childcare. Others will soon be announced. Please watch for more.

BWC Premium Deferral
Yesterday, the State announced that the Bureau of Workers Compensation is providing a deferral on premiums. Here is the release:
Ohio’s Bureau of Workers’ Compensation (BWC) system is the exclusive provider of workers’ compensation insurance in Ohio and serves 249,000 public and private employers. To help businesses facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ohio BWC is announcing that insurance premium installment payments due for March, April, and May for the current policy year may be deferred until June 1, 2020. At that time the matter will be reconsidered.

"BWC will not cancel coverage or assess penalties for amounts not paid because of the coronavirus pandemic," said Lt. Governor Husted. "Installment payments due for the three-month period are totaled at approximately $200 million, and that money will now stay in the economy."
See more here.

Health Insurance Premium Deferral
On Friday the State announced some health insurance premium deferrals for employers.

- Maintains health insurance coverage for workers who have had their work hours reduced if the employee is currently eligible for coverage through their employer sponsored health insurance.
• Payment of premiums may be deferred interest free for up to 60 calendar days.
• Creates special open enrollment period for employees who lose coverage to allow them to get a new policy from the federal healthcare marketplace or from another insurer.
• This order is in effect until the expiration of the governor's state of emergency.

Here is the link to the official bulletin from the Ohio Department of Insurance.

Unemployment
With today’s announcement, we realize that additional businesses will be impacted. Here is an updated OJFS link for Frequently Asked Questions. Remember – employees need to apply online or over the phone (1-877-644-6562). Hearing Impaired TTY Service dial toll-free: 1-888-642-8203. There are no in person applications.

ATTN MANUFACTURERS – Can you help?
JobsOhio, on behalf of Governor DeWine, has asked local Economic Development organizations to develop a list of Ohio manufacturers that make medical personal protective equipment (PPE) or could convert to making it.

Given the current crisis, we wanted to reach out to you to determine if you might have the capacity to assist in this time of national emergency and contribute directly to the effort to combat COVID-19.

JobsOhio is seeking information on manufacturing capabilities for the products listed here - most importantly, the first 13. Please note we are only in the process of quickly obtaining information at this time - there is no feedback yet as to if/when these processes may be needed, but if you have information, please email Jessica Gribben at jgribben@chooserichland.com with the following:
Company Name
Capabilities
Contacts/Address

A Plea for PPE
If you have listened to the State updates, you have heard that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is in very short supply. Our local EMA Director, Rick Evans, is sending out a plea to businesses that may have this material to donate to them for first responders on the front lines of this crisis. That would include things like surgical masks, N95 masks, gloves, gowns, and more. Please call EMA at 419-774-5686 to arrange for pick up or drop off. This is an urgent need to protect our responders. Please help if able!

Families First Coronavirus Response Act
Our friends at the US Chamber have provided a summary of what is contained in the recently passed legislation by Congress and signed by the President. Please check it out here.

Final Thoughts
We have been slowly moving towards this point. Watching the news from other states and countries tells us why this is happening. Many of you are on the front lines, to you, I can only say THANK YOU for your work, and your sacrifice.

To those of us who are not on the front lines, staying at home will protect those who need to be.

It is important that we continue to remember that our choices and actions now are to secure a brighter future ahead. We will need everyone to work together to rebuild when it is time. We will get through
this. It can feel overwhelming, but we must believe that we will emerge. I return to a favorite saga today to close:

“For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty forever beyond its reach.”
— J.R.R. Tolkien, The Return of the King

Share kindness. Share love. We will prevail. Believe.
Onward!
Jodie

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