Dear Members,

Today the Ohio Department of Health updated our Statewide count of confirmed cases to 442. But at the same time, they have also clearly indicated this is a picture of the past as testing is lagging. It was just two weeks ago that the State announced our first case. With yesterday’s Stay at Home order, it is clear we have entered into a new phase of this response. Read on for more updates:

Regarding the Stay at Home Order
I have had many business owners contacting me about how they can determine if they are considered an “essential business.” I watched the Governor’s press conference today and they continue to refer to the language in the document outlining what is considered essential. I’m linking to this again here (please also see the FAQs).

I’ve also been asked if you must register somewhere to be considered essential. To my knowledge, no you do not need to do that.

If you are considered essential, then you are required to provide a safe working environment for your employees as outlined in item #15 in the Director’s Order.

Additionally, each business owner should review item #18 in the Director’s Order – COVID-19 Information & Checklist for Businesses/Employers.

I cannot decide if you are essential. Richland Public Health cannot decide if you are essential. Many of you are directly on the front lines or part of a supply chain that serves the front lines, that is clear.

But others will have to make the tough call to cease operations for the time being (keeping in mind that remote work is fine). These are not easy decisions for anyone. The Governor, Lt. Governor and Dr. Acton today asked businesses to lead with integrity on these decisions to protect their employees and especially our medical responders who will be directly treating infected patients in the days to come.

Pandemic Childcare
I announced yesterday that after Thursday, daycare locations will have to operate under a pandemic license. As we heard the Governor announce, there are additional restrictions that providers must follow during this time including reduced child:adult ratios. As of right now, 8 pandemic locations have received approval from the State, but please continue to check as licenses are still being granted. You can find more here. (please note this link also includes a downloadable list of approved locations by county).

In addition to the Mansfield Y, and Step by Step Daycare that I announced yesterday, additional facilities include: First English Lutheran Early Learning Center, Madison Early Childhood Learning Center, Little Blessing & More, K-City, and JC Kids (contact info in the downloadable list).

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!
Other Resources
Our team has been on the lookout for additional resources to help you. Here are a few:
Click here to see the Ohio Chamber’s COVID-19 Business Resource Page
Click here to see the Ohio Manufacturer’s Association COVID-19 Resource page
Click here to see best practices from MAGNET (aimed at mfg but useful to many others)
Click here to see the US Chamber’s COVID-19 Resource Page

Manufacturers
In yesterday’s email about what the State is looking for as far as producing PPE, I had the wrong link. Here is the correct link and you can see what they are seeking help with. Please email Jessica Gribben if you think you can help!

Final Thoughts
The Governor referenced this quote yesterday:

*I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts.*

Abraham Lincoln

The facts are this. Each and every one of us are making decisions that have a ripple effect on many other lives. Some are answering the call as medical personnel – they are showing up to hospitals or emergency response centers, literally risking their lives because that is what they have sworn to do. Others are answering the call by keeping essential places like grocery stores, government services, and banks open so that society can function. Others are making things that are essential to our supply chains. Others are answering the call by helping the least among us. Many are answering the call by staying home.

Close your eyes. Think of the person that you know and love who is on the “front lines” in this fight. What decisions do you want others to be making right now to keep them safe? We all have those people. We all must weigh our decisions.

This is our national crisis. This is our Ohio crisis. This is our Richland County crisis. No easy decisions. No easy answers. I wish there were.

We can get through this. We WILL get through this. But we must do so together.
We are #RichlandCountySTRONG

Onward!
Jodie

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