



March 19, 2020

Update from Virginia Governor Ralph Northam

The Governor highlighted that he is in close contact with members of our Congressional delegation and Maryland Governor Larry Hogan re: COVID-19. He also shared he is providing updates to the General Assembly members three times/week.

At the time of the 3:00 briefing, Virginia had 94 cases, 19 individuals hospitalized and two deaths. A child in Gloucester has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Clusters continue to be identified, which indicates local transmission. At that point, 1,293 individuals have been tested. The state lab has additional testing capacity to conduct 1,000 additional tests.

DMAS Director Karen Kimsey reported on the action by DMAS to increase access to health care during this pandemic. She specifically highlighted the following:

- Copays for all services covered by Medicaid and FAMIS are being eliminated
- Prescription refills have been extended to 90 days
- Use of telehealth is being expanded, including allowing reimbursement for services provided in a patient's home
- Pre-approval requirements for many critical medical services and automatic extensions for approvals already in place are being waived
- Protecting members from losing coverage is a priority
- DMAS is working very closely with providers at this time

With respect to childcare centers, Governor Northam has directed the Department of Social Services to modify Virginia's Child Care Subsidy program, which is



currently caring for 25,000 children, to increase support and flexibility for enrolled families and providers. These modifications include:

- Expanding eligibility for school-aged children currently designated for part-day care to full-day care
- Increasing the number of paid absences from 36 to 76 days for both level 1 and level 2 providers
- Automatically extending eligibility for families due for eligibility redetermination in the near future by two months and temporarily suspending the requirement for face-to-face interviews

With respect to the economic impact of COVID-19, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today approved an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration for Virginia. This will allow small businesses and nonprofit organizations throughout the Commonwealth affected by the COVID-19 public health crisis to apply for low-interest federal disaster loans of up to \$2 million from the SBA to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, and other expenses. To submit a loan application through the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, please visit disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/.

The Governor also announced that businesses impacted by COVID-19 can request to defer the payment of state sales tax due tomorrow, March 20, 2020, for 30 days. When granted, businesses will be able to file no later than April 20, 2020, with a waiver of any penalties. While required to charge interest, the Administration committed to work with the General Assembly to provide relief for the interest.



The impact of this change is expected to be approximately \$145 million, \$30 million of which will impact localities.

In addition, the Governor has requested that the Department of Taxation extend the due date of payment of Virginia individuals and corporate income taxes. While filing deadlines remain the same, the due date for individual and corporate income tax will now be June 1, 2020. Please note that interest will still accrue, so taxpayers who are able to pay by the original deadlines should do so. Again, it was noted that the Administration plans to work with the General Assembly to provide relief for the interest. The impact of this change to the state budget is estimated at approximately \$100 million for this fiscal year.

At this point, 10,000 unemployment claims have been submitted. For those who have lost their jobs, the one-week waiting period to apply for unemployment has been waived.

With respect to Virginia's justice-involved population, the following was announced:

- In-person visits have been suspended and transfers from local and regional jails has been suspended for the next 30 days to limit potential exposure to the virus.
- Law enforcement is being encouraged to use summons rather than arrests as appropriate.



- Magistrates and judges are being encouraged to consider alternatives to incarceration, as appropriate.
- Judges and prosecutors are being encouraged to modify sentences with alternatives to incarceration, as appropriate.
- The State Police has been directed to suspend enforcement of Motor Vehicle Safety Inspections for 60 days.

To review the press release distributed by the Governor regarding the actions noted above, visit [here](#). To view today's media briefing, visit [here](#).