



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John E. Brooks

COVID-19: FAQs, Resources & Information

JOHN E. BROOKS March 12, 2020

| ISSUE: **COVID-19, CORONAVIRUS, PUBLIC HEALTH**

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CORONAVIRUS, COVID-19, PUBLIC HEALTH

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Senator John E. Brooks: Chairman - Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, & Military Issues

Dear Friends,

During this time of heightened alert, uncertainty and confusion are as dangerous to the health of our greater community as the outbreak itself. Rest assured, as developments unfold I am maintaining the highest possible access to the information and preparedness strategies necessary in combating this crisis. Below is a list of important information and contacts related to COVID-19 and your daily lives. I will be updating this page in real time as

new information becomes available.

If you need further assistance or have questions that are not answered below, please feel free to contact my office at (516) 882-0630 or email me at Brooks@nysenate.gov.

Together we will weather this storm.

Sincerely,

John Brooks

COVID-19 Community Resource Page (Last Updated On 4/23/20 at 11:00am)

CLICK HERE for a list of local school GRAB-N-GO Lunch Programs & Community Food Pantries

Domestic Violence Services

In this age of social distancing, those suffering from domestic violence or abuse may feel more isolated than ever. There have been reports of increased rates of domestic abuse in some areas, but those who need help should know that help is available. There are organizations in Long Island dedicated to helping domestic violence victims as before, though the COVID-19 crisis has limited in-person office hours. Several 24 hotlines are operational, as well as live chat counseling.

L.I. against Domestic Violence: <https://liadv.org/>

24-Hour Hotline: 631-666-8833

The Safe Center L.I. (Nassau County): <http://thesafecenterli.org/>

24/7 Hotline 516-542-0404

Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk (VIBS): <http://www.vibs.org/#>

24-hour hotline at (631) 360-3606

Brighter Tomorrows, Inc: <https://brightertomorrowinc.org/>

24-hour hotline (631) 395-1800

The Retreat (Suffolk County): <https://www.theretreatinc.org/>

Hotline: (631) 329-2200

We thank these organizations for providing essential services and resources for domestic violence victims at this critical time and know that our office will provide assistance using all our resources.

Latest Updates:

New York

- New York State on PAUSE: 100% of the workforce must stay home, excluding essential services through April 29th. Exemptions from the order include shipping, media, warehousing, grocery and food production, pharmacies, healthcare providers, utilities, banks and related financial institutions. For guidance on whether your business is subject to this workforce reduction order, or to request designation as an essential business, please go to ESD Guidance on Essential Businesses (esd.ny.gov).

- High School Regents Exams scheduled for June have been cancelled. NYSED will be issuing Guidance Tomorrow.
- Governor Cuomo will issues an executive order allowing medical students who are slated to graduate to begin practicing.
- Governor Cuomo will issue an executive order to redistribute ventilators and PPE to hospitals with the greatest need.
- The presidential primary election will move from April 28 to June 23rd, aligning it with the congressional and legislative primaries in New York.
- Pharmacies have agreed to offer free home delivery to help reduce long lines for prescriptions at their facilities.
- Statewide school closures are extended by two weeks until April 15.
- The Governor has announced a new online portal that will connect hospitals to volunteer healthcare workers and help prioritize deployment to hospitals with the greatest need.
- The commissioner of the NYS Department of Labor signed an order that limits all work search activities for claimants of unemployment insurance. No work search activities will be required during the pandemic. For more info, and to apply for unemployment insurance benefits, visit labor.ny.gov.
- All non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason are temporarily banned.
- Department of Motor Vehicles offices are temporarily closed for in-office visits. Online transactions, including for license renewals, are still be available. License and permit expirations will be extended.
- Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo moved the deadline to file state income tax returns to July 15 from April 15 to ease the financial impact of the coronavirus outbreak on New Yorkers.

- New Yorkers without Health Insurance can apply through NY State of Health within 60 days of losing coverage.
- Casinos, gyms, theaters, retail shopping malls, amusement parks and bowling alleys are closed until further notice. Bars and restaurants are closed, but takeout can be ordered during the period of closure.
- Extra precautions are in place for New Yorkers aged 70+ and those who are immunocompromised. These individuals are advised to remain indoors, pre-screen all visitors by taking their temperature, wear a mask in the company of others, stay at least 6 feet from others, refrain from taking public transportation unless urgent and absolutely necessary.
- More than 10,000 professional Mental Health Volunteers have signed up to provide free online mental health services.
- 62,000 healthcare workers, including retirees and students, have signed up to volunteer to work as part of the state's surge healthcare force during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Federal

- The federal government is deploying approximately 1,000 personnel to New York State, including doctors, nurses, respiratory technicians and therapists, to help the state's overwhelmed hospital systems.
- The USNS Comfort is currently stationed in New York Harbor. The hospital ship has a capacity of 1,000 hospital beds and 1,200 personnel to help increase hospital capacity in New York City. The ship will not be used to treat people diagnosed with COVID-19. Instead, it will relieve the burden on city hospitals by taking in patients requiring surgeries and other critical care.

- The US Senate passed a financial relief bill totaling over \$2 trillion that will include expanded unemployment benefits, small business job retention loans, direct payments to individuals, and more.
- How much will you get under the federal stimulus plan? (Calculator from Newsday)
- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has extended the deadline for acquiring a Real ID by one year, to Oct. 1, 2021, The previous deadline for acquiring the secure identification had been the beginning of this October, but the closing of Department of Motor Vehicle offices in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic led DHS to extend the deadline.

Senior Services:

New Yorkers Aged 70+, and those with Compromised Immune Systems are advised to follow these guidelines:

- Remain indoors -- solitary exercise outdoors is OK, as long as social distancing rules are followed
- Pre-screen visitors by taking temperature
- Visitors must wear masks
- Stay 6 feet away from others

Additional Resources for Seniors:

- Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs Senior HELP-LINE Available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm: (516) 227-8900
- LICC Senior Helpline: 516-679-0000

- RSVP Suffolk Senior Reassurance Line: 631-979-9490

Food Assistance Programs:

Island Harvest is presently working closely with state and local authorities, member agencies, commercial food donors/suppliers, local school officials, and others to provide supplemental food support to people affected by the coronavirus. For those in need of food assistance, please call 631-873-4775.

Long Island Cares provides several mobile outreach programs that deliver emergency food to seniors, veterans, children and the homeless. A list of mobile events can be found on their Facebook page. If you are unable to get to any of these locations and are in need of immediate help or you know of someone, please call us at 631-582-FOOD (3663) ext. 109 or email emergencyresponse@licares.org.

Veterans Services:

The Nassau County Veterans Services Agency will continue to offer this service over the phone. Transportation services will continue to drive Veterans to important medical procedures. Vehicles are thoroughly cleaned before and after each trip. If you are a Vet in need, please call the VSA to see how they can help: Nassau - 516-572-6565, Suffolk - (631) 853-8389

Nassau County's "Vet Mart" food pantry is open to vets in need, and now has a drive-up program. If you can't pick up, volunteers can come to you. The pantry is located at 2201 Hempstead Turnpike, Building Q, East Meadow, NY and is open Monday-Friday from 9 AM

to 12 PM. Contact: 516-572-6526

SMALL BUSINESSES

The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering up to \$2 million in Disaster Assistance Loans to small businesses negatively affected by coronavirus. For more info, call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

The New York State Department of Labor is waiving the 7-day wait period for those laid off due to coronavirus closures or quarantines. For more information, [click here](#).

The Department of Finance has issued a waiver of penalties for those unable to meet certain filing and payment deadlines for DOF-administered business and excise taxes due between March 16, 2020 and April 25, 2020. Taxpayers may request to have penalties waived on a late-filed extension or return, or in a separate request.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The 7-day waiting period to obtain unemployment insurance will be waived for people who are laid off due to economic impacts of the coronavirus.

In order to handle the high volume of applications, the DOL is now taking applications in segments. Those with last names starting with the letters A through F can file on Mondays; G through N on Tuesdays; rest of the alphabet on Wednesdays. Anyone can apply on Thursdays and Fridays.

UTILITIES, DEBT, BILLS

The Department of Public Service will suspend utilities from cutting off service as a result of the coronavirus.

National Grid is temporarily suspending collection related activities including disconnections. These policies are effective immediately and will be in place through the end of April. Visit ngrid.com/covid-19 for the latest.

For help with student loan payments during this time, call the Community Service Society's Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) at 888-614-5004, Monday to Friday from 9:00am-4:00pm. Visit them at edcapny.org for more information about their free services.

The Attorney General and Governor have announced that the state will temporarily suspend collection of student, medical, and other state-referred debt for at least 30 days. Medical and student debt collection will be suspended automatically. For other forms of debt, you must fill out an application [here](#).

General Information

- [New York State Department of Health Website](#)
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- 24/7 COVID-19 Hotline: 1-888-364-3065

Testing and Health Care

The following are guidelines that are important to follow in order to help prevent further spread of the coronavirus:

- If you have questions about symptoms you are experiencing, or about getting tested for the coronavirus, please call your primary care provider or an urgent care center to discuss your situation. If you do not have a primary care provider, please call the **24-hour state hotline at 1-888-364-3065 or 311** to receive assistance.
- As of March 17, 2020, a drive-through COVID-19 test site has been opened at Jones Beach State Park. In order to get tested, **you must have an appointment**. For more information, please call the New York State Coronavirus Hotline at **1-888-364-3065**.
- Please do not go to your primary care provider's office, an urgent care center, or to an emergency room without calling first unless you are experiencing a medical emergency. This is important in order to protect the safety of health care providers and other patients.
- As directed by Governor Cuomo, all New York insurers will waive cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing. If you have questions or concerns about health insurance costs related to COVID-19 tests or care, please call the Office of the Attorney General's Health Care hotline: **1-800-428-9071**.
- On March 16, 2020, New York State Department of Financial Services announced a special healthcare enrollment period for uninsured New Yorkers. Read more at <https://on.ny.gov/2Uej4fU>. For more information about the NY State of Health Marketplace, please visit: <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/> or call Customer Service at **1-855-355-5777**, TTY: **1-800-662-1220** or find an enrollment assistor.

Frequently Asked Questions

- [Simple steps help stop the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About Monitoring and Movement Restrictions](#)
- [Nassau County Executive COVID-19 FAQ](#)

?Cleaning and Disinfection Guides

- [List of Products Registered in NY for Use Against COVID-19](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19](#)
- [Interim Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance for P-12 Schools \(March 9, 2020\)](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-Healthcare Settings Where Individuals Under Movement Restriction for COVID-19 are Staying](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public Transportation Settings for COVID-19](#)

Health Insurance Questions

- If you have questions or concerns about health insurance costs related to COVID-19 tests or care, please call the OAG's Health Care hotline: 1-800-428-9071.

Consumer Protection Tips

- Beware of scammers selling bogus medical treatments and learn the facts about the coronavirus.
- Report incidents of price gouging by emailing pricegouging@nassaucountyny.gov and by filling out a [Price Gouging Complaint Form](#) with the Attorney General's Office.
- Use caution when making charitable donations. You should never feel rushed or pressured to donate, and never make donations in cash, by gift card, or by money wire.

- Beware of Coronavirus-related investment scams. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission recently warned investors about coronavirus investment frauds. If investors are aware of or suspect securities fraud or wrongdoing, they can contact the [OAG's Investor Protection Bureau](#).

Employment Protections

You may need to take time off from work if you are sick or if a family member is sick. Your employer may have a sick leave policy that provides you with paid sick days or you may have paid sick days if you are union member. If your employer does not have a policy or contract guaranteeing you paid sick leave, you may still have protections under certain laws.

- Workers in New York State have up to 10 weeks of paid leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. This leave may not be used for your own health condition. For more information, please visit the [NYS Paid Family Leave resource site](#).
- The Family and Medical Leave Act provides for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave if you have a serious health condition or are caring for a family member with a serious health condition. You must have worked for your employer for a year and your employer must have 50 or more employees. For more information, please visit the [U.S. Department of Labor](#).
- If you are sick, you may also be able to request unpaid leave as a reasonable accommodation under laws that prohibit disability discrimination. For more information, please visit the [NYS Division of Human Rights](#) or the [NYC Commission on Human Rights](#).
- **If you have questions about your rights in the workplace or if you believe your employment protections have been violated, please contact the OAG's Labor Bureau: 212-416-8700.**
- Unemployment Insurance is potentially available to workers who are fired for taking time off from work due to illness and they may apply for unemployment insurance once they

are able to work. For more information, please visit the [NYS Department of Labor](#).

- Short term disability insurance is potentially available to workers who take time off due to illness. For more information, please visit the [NYS Workers' Compensation Board](#).

Community Events, Gatherings, and Services

On March 16, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced a regional effort by New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut to promote social distancing and help flatten the curve. EFFECTIVE 8PM, March 16, 2020, the following precautions will be taken across NY, NJ, and CT:

- Restaurants/bars will be takeout/delivery ONLY
- Gyms closed
- Movie theaters closed
- Casinos closed