



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Shelley B. Mayer

March 13th: Coronavirus Community Update

SHELLEY B. MAYER March 13, 2020

| ISSUE: [CORONAVIRUS](#), [COVID-19](#), [PAID SICK LEAVE](#), [PUBLIC SCHOOL](#)

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COMMUNITY UPDATE

SHELLEY B. MAYER



Dear Friends:

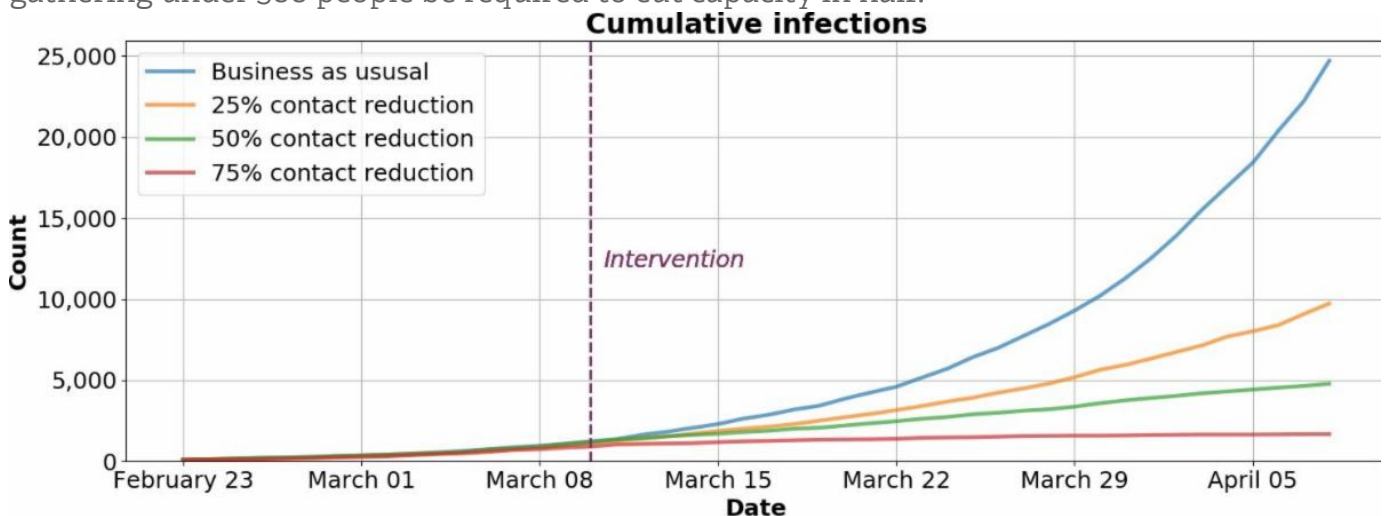
Thank you to the many concerned community members who reached out to request that their local school district close to contain the spread of COVID-19, the coronavirus. This coming week, my colleagues and I will be working to pass a bill to guarantee that any school that chooses to close due to coronavirus concerns based on the health or safety of the school community does not lose state funding under the 180 day law, even if not directed by a state or local health official. Under the current law, and even under the recent [Executive Order](#), it is not clear that superintendents can make a decision to close on their own without direction by state or local health officials without a potential loss under the 180 days provision. In my

opinion, we can't let this virus deter our schools from making locally-based decisions to protect their communities.

To close or not to close a school district is a decision that each local superintendent must weigh with the advice of school board members, teachers, and community members. There are several challenges that each superintendent or chancellor faces including childcare logistics for parents in districts that close, providing students who qualify for free & reduced lunch with meals, ensuring special needs students receive the services they need, and ensuring a plan for distance learning for schools that close for a longer period of time. These are all issues that my colleagues and I, in coordination with the Governor's office and state agencies, are working to address.











BENEFITS & NECESSITY OF SOCIAL DISTANCING TO CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

On Thursday, March 12th, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced new mass gathering regulations to reduce social contact and contain the spread of the virus. The new regulations require that all mass gatherings of 500 or more be postponed or canceled, and any large gathering under 500 people be required to cut capacity in half.



Public health experts agree that social distancing must go in effect as early as possible to control the trajectory of the spread of the virus. We should not wait to implement extensive social distancing protocols. I urge you to work from home if you are able to and avoid social gatherings. The spread of the virus, and the possible lethal outcomes, are dramatically reduced by social distancing. I encourage employers to heed that warning and implement work from home policies, where possible.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AS COMPARED TO THE FLU & COMMON COLD

Symptoms	Coronavirus Symptoms range from mild to severe	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms	Flu Abrupt onset of symptoms
 Fever	Common	Rare	Common
 Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
 Cough	Common* (usually dry)	Mild	Common* (usually dry)
 Sneezing	No	Common	No
 Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 Diarrhea	Rare	No	Sometimes for children
 Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No

Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Chart made available by [Washington Headquarters Service](#)

If you are feeling under the weather, and believe your symptoms might be due to the coronavirus, please call your physician's office. After reviewing your condition over the phone, they will make a recommendation about whether you should come in to be tested, self-quarantine, or any other measures you should be taking to take care of yourself and

protect others. If you don't have a physician, or can't get in touch with one, please call your local urgent care center and speak with someone there.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS, UPDATES & RESOURCES PRICE GOUGING ON ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

If you know or suspect price gouging, you can report it by calling 1-800-697-1220. You can also [file a complaint](#) with the Attorney General's Office. As we stock up on essential supplies for our homes, please remember to take what you need, and be mindful of the needs of other community members as well.

DONATIONS TO FEEDING WESTCHESTER

More and more families will need resources from Feeding Westchester and other local food pantries during this difficult time for our communities. I urge you to do what you can to donate non-perishable food items or monetary donations. To donate to Feeding Westchester, [click here](#).

DISTANCE LEARNING AT SUNY & CUNY

The Governor [announced yesterday](#) that all SUNY & CUNY schools will work to maximize distance learning, and reduce in-person classes, beginning March 19th.

PROVIDING PAID LEAVE FOR AFFECTED WORKERS

The Governor has announced that the state will guarantee two full weeks of paid leave for all state workers who are required to self-quarantine as a result of the coronavirus. My colleagues and I are also working with the Governor's office on legislation for an emergency paid sick leave proposal that would apply to all workers in the state who may have to take time off from work due to the coronavirus.

REMEMBER TO FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Clean and disinfect

Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

[Click here](#) for more information from the Center for Disease Control.

Beginning today, many of my District Office staff members will be working from home, and the office will have limited staff present to answer phones. Please be assured that we are checking voicemails, emails, and social media messages. If there is anything I can help with or you think I should know, please call 914-934-5250 or email smayer@nysenate.gov.

In closing, I urge you to reach out to your neighbors who may need assistance, and as always, if you are able, please continue to patronize our local stores and restaurants. They are the backbone of our communities and deserve our support!

Stay safe & healthy,
Shelley B. Mayer
State Senator