

COVID-19 Update as of March 25, 2020

Situational Update: The total number of COVID-19 cases in New Jersey now stands at 4,402 after 736 more individuals were confirmed to have the virus since yesterday. There have been 18 COVID-19 fatalities in the last 24 hours, bringing the statewide toll to 62.

Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli said the state is carefully tracking COVID-19's progression in New York. Officials there indicated they expect the outbreak to reach its peak in 14 to 21 days. The Commissioner said northern New Jersey can expect a similar trendline to New York's.

Gov. Murphy today answered questions about President Trump's announcement that he hopes to relieve some of the social distancing strategies by Easter. "We just don't see that in the near term," said the Governor.

Childcare: In his daily press briefing, Gov. Murphy announced [Executive Order 110](#) establishing an emergency child care program for healthcare personnel and other essential employees "on the frontlines." NJHA worked with Governor Murphy's executive team, Sen. Joseph Vitale's (D-19) staff and the YMCA Alliance to develop an emergency childcare plan for essential workers. NJHA also received surveys from more than 3,000 employees from member facilities to inform the state's actions. Under the plan, any child care center that chooses to provide emergency childcare for children of essential workers is required to apply for that designation to the N.J. Department of Children and Families by Friday. Any childcare center that does not certify to care for children of essential personnel will be closed effective April 1.

Approved Vendors: In its continuing efforts to address PPE supply issues, NJHA has developed a new resource to assist members in assessing potential suppliers. NJHA has developed a vetting process to determine viable suppliers interested in helping the healthcare community, while weeding out those bad actors that unfortunately have surfaced in this crisis. All companies on NJHA's supplier list have provided their IRS W9 forms. This [list of vendors](#) vetted by NJHA Healthcare Business Solutions is available on [NJHA's Coronavirus web page](#). You will need your member password to access it. This resource will be updated frequently as more vendors are cleared.

Board Updates: NJHA's Board of Trustees met via conference call today on an agenda devoted exclusively to the COVID-19 response. NJHA President and CEO Cathy Bennett and the NJHA executive team provided updates on personal protective equipment, child care, state and federal waivers, PPE procurement and allocation, nursing home admissions and readmissions, behavioral health, clinical care and media relations. Other updates included:

- Board Chair Kevin Slavin provided an update on a conference call yesterday with hospital leaders and members of labor unions to move toward consensus on a number of issues including measures to preserve PPE supplies. The group agreed to several additional discussion topics including patient care protocols, flexibility in deploying staff and testing.
- The [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued guidance](#) on the 6.2 percentage point enhancement to states' federal Medicaid matching funding authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. In order for New Jersey to be eligible for the enhanced funding, the state must continue covering existing Medicaid enrollees for the duration of the emergency period. If New Jersey qualifies, the enhanced FMAP would apply to expenditures retroactive to Jan. 1, 2020, and through the end of the quarter in which the public health emergency ends.
- The Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission yesterday announced [expedited procedures for reviewing the antitrust impact](#) of joint efforts among competitors related to COVID-19. Healthcare facilities may

need to work together to provide resources and services to communities without access to PPE, medical supplies or health care services.

Behavioral Health: NJHA hosted a Behavioral Health provider call with the Department of Human Services. Member participants shared insights from their inpatient and community provider perspectives. Specifically, seeing an increase in Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referrals. DHS Commissioner Johnson updated the group on its efforts to stand up community-based providers to ensure care continuation. Department staff are currently conducting phone surveys with each of the counties to inventory available alternative capacity building opportunities, such as hotels and motels. She also asked that members continue to share issues, such as shelters not accepting referrals, and that DHS be made aware of where a particular shelter is not accepting referral. She also reminded everyone the state's Disaster and Mental Health helpline and suggested that providers remind frontline staff of the resource, 1-866-202 HELP (4357).

Families First Act: The U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division has released several new resources and information regarding COVID-19 and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave provisions of the FFCRA apply to certain public employers, and private employers *with fewer than 500 employees*. [Click here](#) to access Fact Sheets, FAQs, Field Assistance Bulletins and the posters.

NJHA Resources and Support: As a reminder, NJHA's Emergency Preparedness team is available 24/7 to assist providers at 800-457-2262 or epalert@njha.com. In addition, the state's hotline number is 800-962-1253. Official guidance and other resources are available online from:

- CDC [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | CDC](#)
- NJDOH [Department of Health | Communicable Disease Service | COVID-19](#)
- NJHA [The New Jersey Hospital Association](#)