

## **Adams County Commissioners COVID- 19 Update March 25, 2020**

- The Adams County Board of Commissioners this morning ratified the Emergency Disaster Declaration of March 18 in response to COVID-19 that creates a Leadership Council for this emergency, and also directs the Chief Administrative Officer (County Manager) and the Department of Emergency Services Director to coordinate the County's activities and emergency response, to work with state and federal authorities, to take all appropriate action needed to alleviate the effects of this disaster, to aid in the restoration of essential public services, and to take any other action deemed necessary to respond to this emergency. It also opens the door for Federal reimbursement if available.
- The Adams County Emergency Operational Center continues to operate at a Level 3 (Situational Awareness). The Adams County Department of Emergency Services is the county liaison with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the PA Department of Health. Adams County Department of Emergency Services is distributing personal protective equipment to local first responders as soon as it arrives. So far, we have gotten one skid from PEMA that has been distributed. We have been asked numerous times if the county is aware of the location of the 6 confirmed cases in Adams County. Be advised that the PA Department of Health only advises how many confirmed cases are in each county. They do not identify the location of the cases within that county. The dispatchers and staff at the Adams County Department of Emergency Services, and the Corrections staff at The Adams County Adult Correctional Complex, along with other essential county personnel, are the real heroes of our county team for their commitment to our community during this crisis.
- All Adams County buildings remain closed to the public through at least Monday, April 6, pending re-evaluation next week, except for certain court permitted emergency filings or hearings. Staff is on a "work from home" status except for designated essential personnel. During normal business hours the majority of department phone calls and emails are being answered as allowed.
- There are now many concerns and challenges to holding the scheduled Primary Election on April 23. The Adams County Director of Elections Angie Crouse, and the Adams County Board of Commissioners, have expressed those challenges to our legislative representatives. In order to protect the welfare of our poll workers and voters, meet polling place staffing requirements, and provide a safe opportunity to vote, at this morning's

Commissioners Meeting the Board unanimously passed a resolution requesting the legislature postpone the primary election to June 23. As of yesterday, there seems to be a movement in the legislature to postpone to June 2. Voters are reminded there is a mail-in opportunity beginning with this election that does not require any reason, absence or hardship. Voters can apply for a mail-in ballot online (<https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>) or call (717-337-9832) the Adams County Elections Office for assistance.

- Recognizing the financial hardships caused by this pandemic, The Adams County Board of Commissioners, within their authority, will take action to extend the due dates of the 2020 county real estate and per capita tax discounts. Taxes paid by June 30, 2020 will receive the 2% discount and taxes paid by August 30, 2020 will be paid at the par amount. Any payments not received by August 30, 2020, will then be subject to a 10% penalty added to the par amount. Both dates provide a two-month grace extension of the statutory deadlines for discount and par. The spring tax incorporates both the County and Municipal tax. The Adams County Board of Commissioners will be urging each of our 34 municipalities to adopt the same policy for the municipal tax portion. Preliminary indications are that the municipalities will follow the county, state and federal lead in this initiative.
- Adams County's IT capability has become even more significant during this crisis. The IT Department received and will be deploying 50 additional laptops to the workforce to increase mobile work options. They have also upgraded the county firewall to assure continued operation of remote work capabilities. Adams County is utilizing technology to answer phones remotely to assure we are still providing support and follow up to the community we serve. The workforce has been utilizing conference calls as a method to limit exposure risk and continue business operations while limiting.
- The County has also changed the way county mail is being handled in order to reduce risk and exposure to staff and the community.
- Online Virtual Care is a service offered by Capital Blue Cross to all County Employees. Health experts have encouraged use of this as an option to limit exposure risk. Before staff can utilize this service, you must sign up for it. Consider doing this before you would need to utilize the service. There is an Online Virtual Care button/link on the ADP Homepage that will take you to an information page, with a link to sign up, and another link for more information. Human Resources (HR) wants to reassure staff that all necessary functions of the HR office (payroll, benefits, etc.) will continue. If you or anyone in your household is feeling overly anxious, please don't

hesitate to contact the Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-543-5080. This line is open 24 hours a day. It can really help to talk to someone about your concerns and fears. Also, if any of our older employees find themselves needing food or medicine, and are too apprehensive to go out, please contact Michele Miller, HR Director at 717-680-7000.

- We have all heard this a thousand times by now; but it cannot be reinforced enough that washing your hands, social distancing, and staying at home, will help prevent and suppress the curve of this virus to increase the odds that you will not contract the virus and not overload our regional medical facilities.
- Beside recognizing Adams County's essential staff that keeps our prison, 911 center and essential human services operating, let us all pause for a moment as we individually cope with this pandemic, and recognize all our First Responders, Medical and all the other folks in our community who provide critical services that we too often take for granted. THANK YOU! As a former coach said often, "When the going gets tough – the tough get going." On behalf of the Adams County Board of Commissioners - we could not be prouder to be part of this community.
- The PA Department of Health has a number to call for any COVID-19 questions – 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258)

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