



Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

March 13, 2020

TO: ALL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY EXECUTIVES, COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS,
COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS, AND COUNTY CLERKS

FROM: CHERYL SUBLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RACHEL MASSOUD, POLICY ANALYST

RE: COVID-19 UPDATES

On Monday, March 16th, CCAO, CORSA, and CEBCO will begin hosting a daily COVID-19 teleconference for members. The calls will take place at 3:30 pm. The call-in information is as follows:

**Dial 1-877-273-4202
Access code 889-229-624**

These calls will serve as a way for us to share information and answer questions from counties, as well as provide a space for our members to discuss their best practices if they wish. If you know you have a question that you would like answered, please send it to Adam Schwiebert (aschwiebert@ccao.org) in advance to give staff some time to research the answer.

Gov. DeWine Press Conference

Today, Gov. DeWine held another press conference regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Ohio now has 13 confirmed cases, 159 people are currently under investigation in Ohio, and 333 people are under "health supervision."

The governor announced today that his administration will be issuing an order regarding county jails that will mirror the requirements implemented by DRC in state prisons. **This includes suspension of any visitation at county jails.** BSSA, DRC, DPS, and the governor's office have been working on this policy together over the last couple weeks.

A video of the governor's March 13th press conference can be found [here](#). The administration plans to continue daily press briefings at 2 pm. Press conferences can be viewed on www.ohiochannel.org.

AG Yost provides Open Meetings Act guidance during times of emergencies

Attorney General Dave Yost released the following [letter](#) today providing guidance to local communities regarding the Open Meetings Act during times of emergency. A number of commissioners have inquired about Open Meetings Act flexibility, particularly the usage of teleconferencing to conduct meetings. The letter from AG Yost details his office's interpretation of how the Open Meetings Act is to be viewed in light of Director Acton's recent order on mass gatherings.



Fax: 614-220-0209
www.corsa.org



Fax: 614-229-4588
www.cebco.org



Fax: 614-221-6986
www.ccao.org

Yost encourages local governments to consult with their legal counsels on how the Open Meetings Act can be interpreted with respect to case law in their respective jurisdictions.

Ohio EMA on declaring a state of emergency

The following information was sent from the Ohio EMA to County EMA Directors today:

Declarations

- The ORC/OAC does not reserve the ability to declare an emergency to only the state – as such, it gives counties the ability to declare.
 - There would be no specific ORC/OAC chapter to reference for this.
- Local declarations of emergency are not required for typical emergency management funding streams like Stafford Act and State Disaster Relief Program. However, we are not certain what additional funding streams may be opened/available (from other federal/state streams) and what their requirements would be.
- Ultimately, each county will need to weigh their own benefits/concerns to placing an emergency declaration in place and decide accordingly.

Virtual-environment Emergency Operations Centers

- We are asking our county partners to consider virtual EOC environments (to the extent possible) to coordinate your responses.
- The Ohio EMA is currently working on the same task to minimize a physical presence and maximize our ability to support and coordinate with remote elements.
- We will continue to reach out with any changes to our operating environment.

OSU Extension Letter to County Commissioners

OSU Extension released the following [letter](#) detailing changes in their operations during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. You can find the letter [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: If an employee has no daycare due the coronavirus pandemic, can they bring their non-diagnosed non-symptomatic child to work?

Answer: From a loss control perspective only, we strongly recommend against permitting employees to bring a child/children to work. To permit children in the workplace for upwards of 40 hours per week considerably increases the county's risk. For example, children could be injured, cause property damage, or injure employees or members of the public. Further, while children appear to be less likely to contract coronavirus, they are carriers and could infect an employer or members of the public. Children, too, can get infected in the workplace. The above are a few of the reasons upon which we base our recommendation. Should a county permit children in the workplace over our strong recommendation against it, the county should require the employee sign a waiver and assume the risks associated with bringing a child and obtain a legal opinion.

Question: Who can I contact to make sure I am looped in on countywide pandemic response efforts?

Answer: The emergency response planner at your local health department or EMA can include you as county officials in countywide coordination efforts. Our counties have been active in coordinating their strategies with their local health departments.

County Feedback Requested

As the state and counties continue to develop their COVID-19 response plans, we highly encourage counties to share with CCAO any challenges or barriers they are facing in crafting or executing their COVID-19 mitigation strategies. CCAO remains in communication with state policymakers about how the state and counties can partner together while facing this challenge. Your feedback is instrumental in formulating our recommendations. **Please send any challenges, barriers, questions, etc. your county is experiencing to Adam Schwiebert at aschwiebert@ccao.org.**

Other Resources

[White House 3.12.2020 State and Local Partners Briefing Call Notes](#)

Visit <https://ccao.org/resources/coronavirus-updates/> for updates and to view previous memos. As a reminder, current information from the Ohio Department of Health can be found at www.coronavirus.ohio.gov. If you have questions regarding this memo or best practice suggestions relating to COVID-19, please contact Rachel Massoud, policy analyst, at 614-220-7996 or rmassoud@ccao.org.