

Ohio Governor Announces Steps Taken at Federal & State Level to Address COVID-19

By Sherri Warner

The state and federal government continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Roetzel has already sent out an update on federal legislation. Governor DeWine had a press conference this afternoon where it was announced that the number of known cases is 26 spreading to additional counties in Ohio. Hospitals in the state are ramping up their ability to test for the virus while also preparing for the expected influx of individuals needing medical care. Here are steps that are being taken at both the state and federal level:

With the Presidential declaration of emergency, federal funding will become available to state and local governments dealing with the fall out of COVID-19. As we obtain information on how money and supplies can be accessed we will be sharing that with our clients. Additionally, CMS is issuing waivers to hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare providers granting flexibility as they work to address the needs of patients. These include:

- Allowing critical access hospitals to exceed their current bed restrictions and allowing acute care hospitals to house acute patients in units that are typically excluded from acute care
- Removing required hospital stays for transfers to nursing homes for Medicare eligible patients
- Providing states flexibility around provider enrollment and revalidation requirements.

The complete list can be viewed [here](#).

The Governor is encouraging parents to keep their children home from day care settings, if possible, and is asking medical facilities, veterinarian practices and dental practices to think about limiting elective procedures. There may be a need to prohibit these types of procedures during the outbreak to save on personal protective gear along with preserving hospital beds for patients infected with COVID-19. The Department of Mental Health and Addictive Services (OH MHAS) working with the Department of Medicaid have filed emergency rules expanding access to telemedicine. They have also issued new guidance to community health partners treating those battling addiction. The state has requested relief from several federal requirements ranging from extending federal deadlines to spend money or have inspections done to increasing federal funding for healthcare expenditures. The letter from the Governor to President Trump and Vice President Pence can be viewed [here](#).

The Ohio House of Representatives and Senate have implemented their plan to have their staff work remotely. The House has cancelled all session days until further notice while the Senate still has a couple of session days scheduled for the end of this month. Both houses are scheduled to be out of session from April 3rd – 20th for spring break. The state legislature does not have a mechanism for legislators to vote on bills remotely, therefore they must meet, in person, for any bill to pass. Current bills awaiting action include the state's capital budget and bills addressing the expansion of school vouchers.

The situation continues to be fluid. State and federal officials will start to release information on what regulatory waivers they are providing and what funding will be available to those working to address the needs brought on by this pandemic. We will continue to provide information as we receive it.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any of the listed attorneys.

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