



LAWRENCE K. MARKS  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

JOHN W. MCCONNELL, ESQ.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NANCY J. BARRY, ESQ.  
CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

MEMORANDUM

February 28, 2020

To: ~~All Unified Court System Judicial Offices~~  
~~and the Office of the Statewide Access~~  
~~to the Courts~~

From: ~~John W. McConnell, Esq.~~  
~~Nancy Barry~~

Re: ~~COVID-19 Coronavirus~~

We are writing to provide general information about the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) that has been highlighted in news reports over the last several weeks. According to public health officials:

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in many different species of animals. On rare occasions, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people. COVID-19 is such a virus.
- COVID-19 was first detected in China but has now spread internationally, impacting South Korea, Italy, Japan, Iran, Singapore, Hong Kong, and more than thirty other nations, including the United States. At this time, total reported cases exceed 81,000 persons; more than 2700 persons have died from the disease worldwide. The number of cases within the United States is currently small (approximately 60), but – according to various health authorities – is likely to increase in the future.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, coughing, mild to severe respiratory illness/shortness of breath, and pneumonia. Health officials believe that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Most often, person-to-person spread of the disease happens among close contacts (about 6 feet), and is believed to occur mainly when respiratory droplets, produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (or are possibly inhaled into the lungs).

### Personal Prevention

Public health experts currently advise that everyone follow simple, common-sense measures to help promote a safe and healthy workplace, especially during the flu season. These steps are especially important when addressing a virus such as COVID-19:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective and should be used if soap and water are not readily available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Use a tissue if you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your elbow. Dispose of the tissue in a no-touch trash receptacle.
- Get a flu shot.

Attached please find material issued by the Center for Disease Control, that summarizes these precautions. Additional information about COVID-19 may be found on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>, as well as at the New York State Department of Health website at <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>, and the New York City Department of Health website at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page>. The New York State Department of Health has set up a Coronavirus hotline at 888-364-3065.

As you are no doubt aware from recent news reports, we are learning more about this medical emergency daily. Advice and suggested protocols from public health officials at the federal, State and local level are subject to rapid change. We will continue to be in close communication with various government agencies, and will keep you apprised of any important developments, including formal measures that may prove to be necessary, in future memoranda.

c: County Clerks