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COVID-19 Updates

Representative Nasif Majeed [majeedla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2020 8:13 PM

To: Steve Johnston

April 16, 2020

Representative Nasif Majeed District 99



COVID-19 UPDATES

Governor Cooper Shares Path Forward for North Carolina

PEACE. Governor Roy Cooper yesterday charted a path forward for eventually easing certain COVID-19 restrictions while still protecting North Carolinians from a dangerous second wave of the virus.

Expert modeling has shown it would be dangerous to lift the restrictions all at once because it would increase the chances that hospitals become overwhelmed and unable to care for severely ill patients. Cooper emphasized that changes in restrictions must protect public health, especially those who are most vulnerable to severe illness, including people over age 65, those with underlying health conditions and people living in congregate settings.

In order to ease restrictions, the state needs to make more progress in three areas: testing, tracing and trends.

TESTING

State planning relies on an increase in testing capabilities to identify, isolate and track new cases of COVID-19. This means having the supplies and lab capacity to do more testing across the state. Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, has brought together

laboratory partners from the public and private sector to coordinate efforts to ensure testing – diagnostic and antibody - is widely available across the state while also conserving protective equipment.

TRACING

Tracing requires the state to boost the public health workforce and ability to trace contacts of new cases of COVID-19. Contact tracing can be effective at containing new outbreaks, but it requires more personnel. When a person tests positive, the tracing efforts will help identify who that individual may have been in contact with so those people can get tested and take the right precautions. NC DHHS is working with its partners to increase this critical piece of our public health workforce. New digital tools can also help scale this effort.

TRENDS

In order to ease restrictions, the state needs to understand how COVID-19 is impacting the state and impacting specific populations and regions of the state to determine when to strengthen or ease social distancing policies. Trends that will influence policy decisions will be based on data like the new positive cases, hospitalizations, deaths, as well as available supply of personal protective equipment, hospital capacity.

Staying Informed and Prepared

Text COVIDNC to 898211 to receive general information and updates about COVID-19 and North Carolina's response.

Dial 2-1-1 provides free, confidential information and is available 24 hours a day to help you find resources within your community. They can connect you with people and groups that can help with questions about access to food, shelter, health care, employment and child care.

Families who need food assistance for their children can text FOODNC to 877-877 to find free meal sites in their communities.

Optum has a toll-free 24-hour Emotional Support Help Line at 866-342-6892 for people who may be experiencing anxiety or stress due to Coronavirus.

Health Care Volunteers Needed

A crucial part of supporting our health care system includes recruiting volunteers to supplement our health care workforce. North Carolina is asking for your help to meet these needs. This response is provided through the State Medical Response System (SMRS), which recruits and manages volunteers in the following areas:

- Clinical (physicians, advanced care providers, nurses, EMS)
- Clinical Support (pharmacy, imaging and respiratory care)
- Non-clinical support (facility maintenance, safety, and administrative)

If you can volunteer please [register here](#).

COVID-19 Info from Across State Government

For a great list of state resources in one place, visit:

<https://www.nc.gov/covid19>.

It has links to:

- [Unemployment Information](#)
- [Help for Small Businesses](#)
- [Child Care Help](#)
- [N.C. Health & Human Services](#)
- [Español: Recursos e Información](#)

Update on COVID-19 Case Count

According to the Department of Health and Human Service's official count as of today, April 16, North Carolina has 5,465 cases. There are 94 counties with cases. There are 452 people hospitalized with COVID-19 and 131 confirmed deaths for North Carolina.

Mecklenburg County has 1,084 confirmed cases, with 19 deaths.

The dashboard in the link below shows cases per county and is being updated daily.

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/covid-19-case-count-nc>

Time For Immediate Action

In closing, I am awfully troubled and deeply disturbed in view of these unprecedented times confronting our communities throughout North Carolina. I find that our Republican-led General Assembly needs to address some critically important unfinished business that affects the quality of life for the least of us.

First, we need to immediately pass a Medicaid Expansion Bill. There is no earthly reason why we haven't already expanded healthcare, which would have covered 500,000 uninsured North Carolinians. Especially since the federal government will cover 90% of the cost and our hospitals will cover the remaining 10%. By the way, this would also produce some 40,000 plus jobs and literally save our rural hospitals from bankruptcy.

Secondly, the current minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. **This is past ludicrous!!!!** The last minimum wage adjustment was in 2008 and that was a whopping 70¢ increase. Our unemployment insurance compensation ceiling is \$350 per week and lasts only for 12 weeks, which is the lowest in the United

States. We should be ashamed!

A recent study indicated that more than 2,000 people in North Carolina are dying each year simply because they don't have health care. I think that is criminal. The Republican majority has to take action now and join in with the Democratic minority to **"Do The Right Thing!!"**

I realize there's a lot going on, but I'm asking you to call or email the **Republican members of the NCGA** today and ask them to address these critically important issues for the people of North Carolina. Thank you.

PEACE!!



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