Stay informed about the
CORONAVIRUS

Information from the
New York State Assembly

How can I protect myself?

You should take steps commonly used to prevent the spread of illnesses, such as:

- frequently washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

- avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth

- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue

- staying home when you're sick

- avoiding contact with someone who is sick

- disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces at home and at work

For updates and more information, visit the New York State Department of Health website at www.ny.gov/coronavirus or call 888-364-3065.

Sign up for email updates from the CDC at
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/whats-new-all.html.

Assemblymember
Rodneyse Bichotte

provides an update on

Coronavirus

and Announces Cancelled Public Events

Assemblymember Bichotte's
Women Distinction Awards Cancelled
on March 19th

As the number of 2019 **novel coronavirus (COVID-19)** cases increase, it's important that everyone has the facts.

First, while this is a serious, evolving public health issue, there is no reason to panic. The vast majority of people who have contracted the virus haven't become seriously ill and only a small percentage require intensive care. [1] Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems, respiratory conditions or diabetes are more likely to develop serious illness. [2]

New York State and federal health officials are carefully monitoring the outbreak, studying how the virus spreads and how to combat it and are working to find a vaccine. The novel coronavirus has not previously been found in humans and was discovered late last year. [3]

As of the afternoon of March 11, there are 216 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New York State. [4]

While you will likely be seeing numbers continuing to rise, it's important to keep in mind that as health officials get more tests done, the more cases they'll uncover. [5] Increased testing will help health officials gather more information to combat its spread. This means that infected individuals can take proper measures to help keep the virus from spreading and get the treatment they need if necessary.

The state is currently working on measures to contain the virus and limit New Yorkers' exposure. **New York is also investing in a $40 million plan** to purchase necessary equipment and supplies and hire and train more health care workers. In addition to constant communication with local and health officials, state leaders and the Department of Health (DOH) are also holding conference calls with people on the ground to ensure those on the frontlines have everything they need to slow the spread of coronavirus. And the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized New York to test locally for the virus, which means **results are now possible for COVID-19 within hours**. [6]

COVID-19 shouldn't be confused with coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people causing mild illnesses like the common cold. **The most common symptoms include fever, tiredness and a dry cough, and some people may experience aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea** . Anyone with a fever, cough and difficulty breathing should call their doctor prior to a visit so they can be directed, if necessary, to the right health facility for testing and treatment. This will help prevent the novel coronavirus from spreading and also protect you from other viruses and infections. [7]

While researchers are still studying how the virus spreads, individuals can catch COVID-19 from others who have it. They believe it **can spread from person-to-person via small respiratory droplets from the nose or mouth when a person with the virus coughs or exhales. These droplets can land on surfaces or objects, and others can catch COVID-19 by touching the surfaces or objects and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Officials say the virus can also be caught by breathing in the droplets, which is why it's important to stay more than three feet away from anyone who is sick.** [8]

While you may have seen photos of individuals wearing masks, they're not effective at preventing someone from getting the virus. Masks are intended for use by health care professionals, people who are already ill and are trying to ensure they don't get others sick and those taking care of someone who is sick. There is currently a world-wide shortage of masks so please use them wisely and only when absolutely necessary to avoid waste and misuse. [9]

You can stop the spread of coronavirus

- Wash your hands regularly
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- Avoid touching your face

The best preventative steps you can take are the tried and true ones:

- frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your elbow[10]
- try to avoid coming in contact with someone who is sick
- disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces at work and at home.[11]

If you can't wash your hands with soap and water, be sure to **use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol** . [12] If you're at a **higher risk** of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, such as the **elderly** or those with **underlying medical problems** , you should also try to avoid crowds and touching high-touched surfaces such as door handles, hand rails and elevator buttons. [13] In order to better protect yourself, those who smoke should cut back or try to quit as smokers are at higher risk of getting respiratory infections and twice as likely to develop pneumonia than a non-smoker. [14] It's also important that you stay home if you're feeling sick to prevent germs from spreading.

New York City officials are asking that anyone who is able to avoid public transportation do so, or if a bus or subway car is packed, wait for one that has more room. [15]

Experts have recommended ensuring you have basic home supplies – food staples, laundry detergent, over-the-counter medicine and pet food. You should also try to have at least a 30-day supply of any prescription medication. Go over any emergency plans you may have with every member of your household and make sure you keep up-to-date with any information from your child's school district.

Meanwhile, the governor has said the state would institute new cleaning protocols in heavily used public areas, such as bleaching surfaces on public transportation and in schools. [16] Local health departments will notify school districts if and when they need to close and when they can reopen. [17]

Cancelled Events

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the COVID-19 a global epidemic.
- **CUNY and SUNY,** the state's public university system has cancelled in-person classes Starting March 19 through the end of the spring semester [20]
- All NYC Public Schools remain open except Laboratory school of Finance and Technology, South Bronx Preparatory School, Also monitoring the following schools IS 34 and IS 27.
- **All Catholics are being closed.**
- **Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte's Women of Distinction Annual Award Ceremony has been cancelled.**
- **St. Patrick's Day Parade** is cancelled.
- **NBA** season is cancelled.

- **MLB** spring training is cancelled.
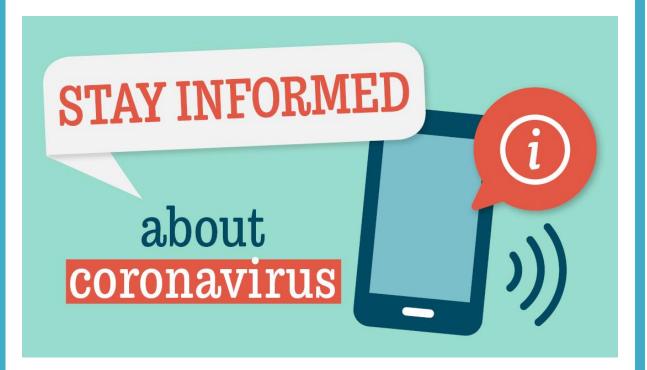- **NCAA** Conference Tournaments cancelled.
- **MLS** Suspended.

SMALL BUSINESS

- **New York City will also be providing relief to small businesses that see a reduction in revenue because of COVID-19**

- **Businesses with fewer than 100 employees whose sales have decreased more than 25% will be eligible for zero-interest loans of up to $75,000 to help mitigate the losses.**[18]

- **Small businesses with fewer than five employees will also be offered a grant to cover 40% of payroll costs for two months to help retain employees.**[19]

- **Anyone interested in learning more about these programs should call 311 for more information**

At the state level, we continue to discuss ways to ensure employees aren't forced to choose between staying home when sick – and not getting paid – or providing for their families. This includes discussing an expanded sick leave policy and measures to help small businesses that have been adversely affected by COVID-19.

Health officials are working tirelessly to protect public health and contain this virus. And, as your representative in Albany, I am working to ensure that our state is putting the health and safety of our families first.

Remember COVID-19 can affect any community and we must stand by one another during this time, not alienate, threaten or discriminate against others.

For questions you can also reach out to the New York State's novel coronavirus hotline at **1-888-364-3065** . For continuous updates, you can visit the following websites:

- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](#)
- [World Health Organization (WHO)](#)

The CDC also now has the option for you to sign up for weekly updates on COVID-19.

RECAP

CORONAVIRUS: Q & A

What a What are the symptoms?
Symptoms range from mild to severe and include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms often appear two to 14 days after exposure.

How does it spread?
Health officials are studying how the virus spreads, but it's believed to spread from person-to-person via respiratory droplets that are released when an infected person coughs. Individuals are believed to be most contagious when they're the sickest.

When should I see a doctor?
If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness such as a cough or shortness of breath, call your health care provider before seeking treatment in person and tell them you may have the novel coronavirus so they can take proper precaution

Resources:
[1] nytimes.com/article/prepare-for-coronavirus.html
[2] who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses
[3] health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus
[4] https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/
[5] newyork.cbslocal.com/2020/03/09/coronavirus-update-new-jersey-patient-speaks-out
[6] politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2020/03/02/cuomo-de-blasio-urge-calm-in-wake-of-new-yorks-first-confirmed-coronavirus-case-1264696
[7] politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2020/03/02/cuomo-de-blasio-urge-calm-in-wake-of-new-yorks-first-confirmed-coronavirus-case-1264696
[8] who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public
[9] who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses
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[11] health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus
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[19] cnbc.com/2020/03/09/nyc-mayor-urges-new-yorkers-to-work-from-home.html
[20] https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/ny-cuny-suny-classes-coronavirus-20200311-f65rooi5vrflphblcun5y7yuym-story.html
[21] nytimes.com/2020/03/10/nyregion/coronavirus-new-york-update.html

Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte represents the 42nd Assembly District in Brooklyn covering Ditmas Park, Flatbush, East Flatbush and Midwood. She is currently the **Chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs)** , and serves on the following committees: **Housing, Government Operations, Education** , **Banks, Health, and Higher Education** . She is also a member of the Task Force on Women's Issues and sits on **Governor Cuomo's Domestic Violence Advisory Council and Mayor De Blasio's MWBE Task Force.**

As a current Assemblymember, District Leader, and Chair of Brooklyn Democratic Party, Rodneyse Bichotte has been an outspoken advocate on issues concerning **immigration, education, economic development, unemployment, education reform, health care access, senior citizen centers, affordable housing, school safety, women's and LGBTQ rights** , as well as other issues affecting the quality of life in the community.

Learn more about
Rodneyse Bichotte by visiting her website:
http://nyassembly.gov/mem/Rodneyse-Bichotte

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