

Rebecca Seawright



Dear Neighbor,

We welcome this opportunity to connect with you to provide updates and resources you may not have seen already in the news surrounding COVID-19. Yesterday, I supported legislation as a cosponsor to immediately provide all New Yorkers with sick leave during the coronavirus pandemic. The legislation was signed by the Governor last evening and will take effect immediately.

The total statewide cases of COVID-19 has reached 4,152 in New York State with 2,469 in New York City. We are preparing on the State level to provide surge care in mobile facilities, increased testing, paid family leave and a budget to include COVID-19 relief. An Executive Order was signed directing non-essential businesses to implement work-from-home policies effective this Friday, March 20. The order exempts shipping, media, warehousing, grocery and food production, pharmacies, healthcare providers, utilities, banks and related financial institutions, and other industries critical to the supply chain. The U.S. Senate approved an emergency stimulus package Wednesday to prevent the fallout of the coronavirus outbreak, including \$6 billion to New York for healthcare costs. Over \$1 billion more will come to the state in unemployment benefits, free testing, and paid emergency sick leave, according to Senator Chuck Schumer. Of the \$6 billion, over \$1 billion will go directly to New York City.

Ways to increase hospital capacity in New York are being explored. On Roosevelt Island, Coler Hospital will be making beds available for low acuity patients to make room at other hospitals. You may have heard that we can expect the USNS Comfort hospital ship to be deployed to New York harbor and is expected to arrive in April. The 1,000-bed hospital ship has 12 fully-equipped operating rooms and will significantly increase New York's hospital surge capacity.

We hope you find the information below to be informative and helpful. If you are in need of information or assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our office. We regretfully have suspended in person appointments and meetings, due to public health considerations. We are eager to continue assisting constituents by telephone and email. Please leave a message on our voicemail with your name, address and phone number and our staff will return your call:

Phone: 212.288.4607

Email: SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov

The Shred-a-thon initially scheduled for March 28 has been postponed until further notice. Additionally, our Tuesday Housing Legal Clinic and Tuesday Knitting social are suspended until further notice. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,



Click to Visit Our Website

Surge Care in the 76th District

The City will create approximately 1,300 hospital beds through the conversion of four buildings into temporary hospital space. These include the NYC Health + Hospitals/ Coler on Roosevelt Island, which will bring an additional 350 beds online by the end of the week.

The Mayor's Office has advised that patients in need of lower levels of care will move to empty beds at Coler Hospital to free up our frontline hospitals urgently responding to very seriously ill patients infected with the coronavirus. We are monitoring the situation very closely and encourage residents of Roosevelt Island to contact my office with any additional concerns they may have.

New York Presbyterian - People can access tele-health services instead of coming to Emergency Departments. [Click here to start your appointment.](#)

Help Your Fellow New Yorker

Volunteer Opportunities Big and Small

Activate to help your neighbors: Mayor de Blasio [announced New York City is seeking healthcare surge staff support. Visit NYC's Help Now NYC to sign up for reserve support to expand centers for treatment.](#) If you have a large space that might be suitable as a community location or health care screening site, the Office of Emergency Management wants to know about it. Send an email to publicprivate@oem.nyc.gov.

Fight stigma by sharing the [stigma tracker](#). We know that COVID-19 can negatively impact our emotional well-being, not just our physical health. In order for the Health Department to better protect and promote the health of all New Yorkers.

Engage with your city: The City will continue to provide a range of resources and services that help New Yorkers. For updates on coronavirus, text COVID to 692-692.

Connect with family, friends and colleagues from home. Make use of free conference calling services to work or be social at home:

[FreeConference.com](#)

[Zoom](#)

[Skype](#)

[Google Hangouts](#)

To that end, AT&T, Comcast, Charter Communications, and Verizon are among many providers opening up their services to help ease people's burdens during the coronavirus pandemic. The pledge is made with the following commitments (1) not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic; (2) waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and (3) [open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.](#) [Click here.](#)

Keep Calm and Stay Home

Keeping Your Daily Routine Under Quarantine

Finding it difficult to stay home for long? Here are some ideas to pass the time and keep your normal routine without leaving your home:

- **Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea via Google Hangouts**, FaceTime, or Zoom video conferencing!
- **92Y @ Home**- During this time, 92Y is exploring innovative and creative ways to keep you, our community, engaged and connected. Check out their website for some of the programs you can enjoy remotely in the coming days. [*Click here.*](#)
- **Connect with a group of your friends** and do short wellness activities in the comfort of your own home. You could join each other virtually for a yoga session, meditation, or launch a friendly competition on a smartwatch to encourage some type of physical activity!
- **Fill out the census**- The 2020 Census has officially begun, and it is vital that your household complete the Census this year. Millions of dollars in federal funding and Congressional representation rests on a complete and accurate count. [*Click here.*](#)
- **Take a walk in the park!** - At this time, City parks and playgrounds are open, with the exception of the High Line. Comfort stations within parks will remain open, and will continue to be cleaned and resupplied regularly. If anyone observes a comfort station that is not properly supplied, the best way to route the report is via 311, so the agency can be immediately notified and the matter can be addressed accordingly. Park rules remain in effect, and Parks Enforcement Patrol officers are being assigned to patrol & enforcement details as per usual. As of Tuesday, March 17, all City recreation centers and nature centers were closed to the public until further notice. In response to the State and City's directive, NYC Parks has cancelled all events with 50 or more expected attendees through April 12, 2020.

Health And Mental Health

New York State of Health Special Open Enrollment Through April 15

GetCovered**NYC**

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Through **April 15th**, health insurance enrollment is now open for uninsured New Yorkers as part of a **Special Enrollment Period** —with all coverage effective as of April 1st.

Call **311** or visit nyc.gov/GetCoveredNYC for **FREE** enrollment assistance

Open Enrollment- In light of the COVID-19 public health emergency, NY State of Health announced a *Special Enrollment Period* for New Yorkers to enroll in health insurance through the marketplace (<https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>) and directly through insurers. Individuals who enroll in a Qualified Health Plan between March 16th and April 15th will have coverage **effective April 1st**.

Feeling anxious, stressed or overwhelmed? Connect with the NYC WELL's confidential helpline: Call 888-692-9355, text "WELL" to 65173 or chat online at nyc.gov/nycwell.

Tips for coping with stress during infectious disease outbreaks. [Click here](#).

Alcoholics & Narcotics Anonymous - New York Inter-Group office is closed to volunteers and customers but will continue to offer help via telephone and web chat to those in need of a meeting. [Click here](#).

NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault- The Alliance is switching to remote office hours - M-F 9 am to 5 pm. For support, please contact info@svfreenyc.org. Email will be checked routinely and forwarded to phone staff.

Avoiding COVID-19 Scams and Price Gouging

Consumer Alert

Price Gouging - According to the New York State Attorney General's office, Price Gouging Law (General Business Law § 396-r) prohibits merchants from taking unfair advantage of consumers by selling goods or services that are "vital to the health, safety or welfare of consumers" for an "unconscionably excessive price" during an abnormal disruption of the market place or state of emergency. To file a price-gouging complaint with the Attorney General's office, see the online form at ag.ny.gov/price-gouging-complaint-form or calling the NYS Consumer Protection Division Hotline at 800.697.1220.

Scams - The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) warns individuals to remain vigilant for scams related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Avoid clicking on links in unsolicited emails and be wary of email attachments. For more information [click here](#).

A Message from Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security - *"I want you to hear directly from me how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our services. The first thing you should know is that we continue to pay benefits. Be aware that scammers may try to trick you into thinking the pandemic is stopping your Social Security payments but that is not true. Don't be fooled."*

For more information, please visit <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/>.

Resources For Seniors and Vulnerable Populations

Our district's centers for senior and social services are conducting special operations to ensure vulnerable populations are protected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Operations:

- Our Women's Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory and our Casa Mutua supportive housing residence in East Harlem are staffed and operate 24/7 - these vulnerable clients need us now more than ever.
- Many of our teams, like so many New Yorkers, are now working remotely but continue to serve thousands of clients. These include our 26-member Legal Department, our Caregiver Program and much more; our Geriatric Care Management team is busier than ever, helping our 1,200 homebound older adult clients navigate this crisis to remain safe and healthy in their homes.

- Our Food Services and Facilities teams have been working around the clock for weeks to keep our sites clean and sanitary and to continue to provide thousands of meals for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Carter Burden Network will be serving takeaway meals at each of its centers, social services will be available via telephone, and staff will make outreach calls to check-in on our participants.

- Carter Burden Luncheon Club at Epiphany: lunch from 11:45am - 2pm ONLY served on Wednesday 3/18 this week (frozen meals and cold packs will be given out for the rest of the week)
- Roosevelt Island: lunch from 11:30am - 1pm (frozen meals for the weekend will be given out on Friday starting at 11:15am)

Grocery Shopping- Acknowledging that older adults and persons with underlying health conditions are more susceptible to COVID-19, a growing number of stores are dedicating time or opening earlier for senior shoppers and other at-risk groups. Because of panic shopping, which has left store shelves empty, at-risk groups including seniors have had difficulty getting supplies.

Shop on Amazon.com as an EBT customer. [Click here.](#)

[Click here](#) for senior hours at Whole Foods.

[Click here](#) for senior hours at Target.

Morton Williams will be blocking off 7 - 8 am for Seniors

Important Numbers:

Meals on Wheels - [212 687-1234](tel:2126871234)

New York Foundation for Seniors - [212 962-7653](tel:2129627653)

Aging Connect (Department For the Aging) - [212 244-6469](tel:2122446469)

Lenox Hill Case Management - [212 218-0506](tel:2122180506)

Survivors of Domestic Violence- Safety planning guide available from Sanctuary for Families. [Click here.](#) It's critical that people currently quarantining with abusive partners know that help is available even in this time of crisis.

Immigrants - Need a provider? **Call 844-692-4692 or 311**, regardless of immigration status, insurance status or ability to pay.

Public Assistance Recipients - The Human Resources Administration offices remain open and ready to serve those in need. For those unable or unwilling to come to our offices, NO NEGATIVE CASE ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN including services with the Office of Child Support Services and Career Service providers. Those who do not wish to report to their assigned center, HRA Centers will assist clients no matter which center they normally report to.

American Sign Language: What You Need to Know

What You Need to Know About Coronavirus (In ASL)

NYC Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities

Education, School Meals and Childcare

Local schools
and businesses
are offering

free grab-and-go meals
for kids who need them.



New York City public schools are closed until [April 20](#), 2020 by order of the State. Teachers are being asked to report to their schools this week to be trained in remote learning. Schools are scheduled to implement remote learning on [March 23rd](#). The City of New York had until midnight [last night](#) to present to the State its plans for meal delivery and child care services.

Grab & Go breakfast/lunch available for any student at the entrance of every DOE school building from 7:30am-1:30pm. That means ANY child 18 and under can go to the nearest public school and pick up a meal, not just public school students. [Click here.](#)

DOE is asking families to complete a survey sharing their best contact information over the next few weeks as well as whether they have access to a smartphone, a laptop/tablet/computer, the internet, or none of the above. [Take the official DOE learning devices survey here.](#)

The Pre-K application deadline has been extended to Sunday, March 29th. Pre-K offers will still be released in May.

Free Childcare Grades 3K-12 For Working Parents - Starting on Monday, March 23, Regional Enrichment Centers will be available for the children of first responders, healthcare workers, transit workers, and our most vulnerable student populations, with more details to follow. [Click here.](#)



Approximately 100
regional enrichment centers

across all five boroughs
will open on **March 23** for
children in grades 3K-12
who need somewhere
to be while their
parents work.

Relief For Small Businesses and Employees

Unemployment - The State has waived the 7-day waiting period for qualifying for unemployment insurance. If you lose your job from COVID-19-related reasons, you will immediately qualify for benefits. I have asked the Governor to create similar relief program for those who would not normally qualify for unemployment insurance coverage, including domestic workers, freelancers and other independent contractors.

Small Businesses- The City will provide relief for small businesses across the City seeing a reduction in revenue because of COVID-19. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees who have seen sales decreases of 25% or more will be eligible for zero interest loans of up to \$75,000 to help mitigate losses in profit. The City is also offering small businesses with fewer than 5 employees a grant to cover 40% of payroll costs for two months to help retain employees. [Click here.](#)

The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce opened a Help Desk to businesses throughout the city so they can receive expert help and be connected to legal and financial assistance. Please email helpdesk@manhattancc.org with any business concerns you have. There is no fee for this service. [Click here.](#)

Utilities - Con Edison has temporarily suspended all collections-related activities. [Click here.](#)

Suspension of Debt Collection - The OAG will temporarily halt the collection of medical and student debt owed to the State of New York and referred to the OAG for collection, for at least a 30-day period, in response to growing financial impairments resulting from the spread of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). [Click here.](#)

State debt collection on ***student debt*** and ***medical debt*** will have payments frozen for **at least 30 days.**

Housing

Evictions- New York State has placed a moratorium on marshals notices and eviction cases. Met Council on Housing's Tenant Rights Hotline is 212-979-0611

NYCHA - NYCHA's Administrative Hearing Office is postponing all cases for two weeks, at which time they will reevaluate the hearing schedule to determine if the postponement should be extended.

Transportation

Getting Where You *NEED* To GO

Access - A - Ride - The MTA is no longer scheduling shared rides for Access-A-Ride services effective March 19. Customers will still be permitted to travel with a personal care attendant and approved guest.

MTA Subways and Buses - Open for those who need them. That includes our medical professionals, firefighters, law enforcement personnel, child care workers, food service employees, and everyone else we need to keep New York safe and healthy.

Every day, subway cars, commuter trains, buses, work spaces and offices are being disinfected. The entire MTA fleet gets disinfected at least every 72 hours. In stations and on buses, they are cleaning and disinfecting the surfaces customers touch at least twice a day. NYCT is available 24/7 on Twitter at @NYCTSubway, and @NYCTBus, and via phone at 511. Check new.mta.info/coronavirus and sign up for the City's text alerts by texting COVID to 692-692.

Red Bus Service on Roosevelt Island - As of 3/19/2020, the Red Bus will operate on a Weekend Service Schedule until further notice. This means the bus will make all local stops every 15 minutes from 5:30 AM - 2:30 AM. There will be no Octagon Express Bus Service.

Ride Share- The Mayor issued an executive order banning shared rides on popular e-hail services in an effort to promote social distancing.

Other Announcements

Presidential Primary - The New York State Board of Elections is discussing the possibility of delaying the presidential primary from [April 23rd](#) to June. The Queens Primary has been canceled,

Alternate Side Parking Regulations - will be suspended from Wednesday, March 18, 2020 to Tuesday, March 24, 2020. Parking meters and all other parking rules remain in effect throughout the City.

The City may extend the suspension based on street cleanliness and workforce availability.

Public Gatherings - The Federal government has limited public gatherings to no more than 10 people. The State of New York has ordered a mandatory closure of all restaurants and bars, which will be take-out or delivery only. The State Liquor Authority will waive rules and allow liquor take-out. Gyms, movie theaters and casinos are closed.

Unified Court System - All non-essential functions of the courts were suspended as of 5 pm on Monday, March 16. Jurors should not appear for duty. Potential jurors will hear from the Court in the future with another date for service.

Essential court functions will continue:

- Pending Trials: Criminal and civil trials will continue to conclusion
- Special Parts: Special court parts will be established in individual jurisdictions outside NYC
- NYC Housing Court: Essential applications as the court may allow
- e.g., landlord lockouts, serious housing code violations and repair orders
- Moratorium – starting March 16 all eviction orders and pending eviction cases are suspended statewide for one week
- Family Court: Essential matters as the court may allow
- e.g., issues related to child protection proceedings, juvenile delinquency proceedings, family offenses and support orders

**SIGN UP FOR UPDATES FROM NEW YORK
STATE [HERE](#).**