

April 1, 2020



## NYSAC Special Bulletin

Between the Legislature and COVID-19, news is breaking at a pace like we've never experienced — and it all directly ties to the work New York's counties are doing. To help keep you as updated as possible, NYSAC will be sending out daily "Special Bulletins."

### Top Three Takeaways

**We get it. You have too many things to do and not enough time to do them. Here are the top 3 things you need to know.**

- 1) NYC to close all playgrounds in response to poor social distancing cooperation
- 2) As of this writing, the Medicaid provisions of the state budget are still being negotiated.
- 3) Legalized cannabis is NOT in the budget, \$65 Million for Extreme Winter Weather road repairs IS included.

### **COVID-19 by the Numbers**

- 220,880 tests / 15,694 new
- 83,712 cases / 7,917 new
- All counties now have at least 1 confirmed case
- 43% of U.S. cases are in NYS
- 12,226 hospitalized / 1297 new
- 3022 ICU / 312 new
- 1941 deaths (up from 1550 yesterday) ~ 25%
- 291 daily intubations
- 6,142 patients discharged (this is up – that's good)
- 195,929 cases nationwide, 4,310 deaths



### **NYC Closing Playgrounds, Open Spaces to Remain Open**

At his daily press conference, Governor Cuomo announced that New York City will close playgrounds in response to a failure to adhere to social distancing protocols.

Additionally, the Governor announced that New York State is creating an enforcement task force to assist local law enforcement. The Governor's regional reps are reaching out to county leaders today. It's rolling out to streamline reporting of violations of the PAUSE executive order, streamline methods of enforcement, and provide local law enforcement with some assistance.

## State Budget Update

As the legislature finishes up passing budget bills, NYSAC is working on our budget impact report. We hope to have something to all counties as soon as the budget is passed.

NYSAC is still processing everything and as of writing this report, the Medicaid negotiations remain open.

### Some initial highlights:

The Budget contains a provision granting the State Budget Director broad authority to unilaterally reduce reimbursements to local governments based on available state revenue, reported monthly.

According to the language, if the Financial Plan is out of balance by more than one percent (about \$1 billion) during any measurement period, the budget director can adjust all appropriations, including capital and operating aid.

For counties, this means the state will make cuts across the board, including reimbursement to counties for the range of programs we fund and provide at the local level, if revenues fall below this threshold.

[Read our statement about this proposal here.](#)

Spending cuts could be restored in whole or in part if one or both of the following happens:

1. Actual tax receipts in State Operating Funds is 98 percent of the budgeted amount through February 28, 2021; or
2. The federal government provides aid that the director of the budget deems sufficient to reduce or eliminate the imbalance in the General Fund for fiscal year 2020-2021 and does not adversely impact the budget gap in fiscal year 2021-2022. These full or partial restorations will only occur if the budget director also certifies that all required payments for state fiscal year 2020-21 will be made, including tax refunds, and state reserves are equal to what they were at the start of the state fiscal year.



### Other items of importance:

- Community college base funding has been reduced by \$31 million.
- There is no additional funding for early voting.
- VLT aid is restored.
- The budget appropriates \$13 million for Code Blue.
- The budget includes a \$1 million increase to Summer Youth Employment.
- RTA funding is increased \$250 M.

- Legalization of cannabis is rejected.
- Shared county jails is rejected.
- CHIPS bidding threshold will increase from \$250k to \$350k
- \$65 M is included for extreme winter roads.
- CHIPS funding is level from last year.
- The Enacted Budget provides \$236 million in operating support for Upstate transit, for a 4 percent increase year over year, and \$405.2 million for downstate systems, representing a year over year increase of 16 percent.
- The Enacted Budget provides up to \$100 million for a second round of funding for the Upstate Airport Economic Development and Revitalization

## Take 5 for NY

We recently launched a new social connection campaign called Take 5 for NY.

In our current situation, six feet can feel like 60 miles. But, social distancing does not have to be social isolation.

This campaign encourages residents to take just five minutes out of their day every day to call on a loved one, friend, neighbor, acquaintance to say hi, check on them, see if they need anything, lift their spirits, and tell them they are not alone. It doesn't matter what they talk you talk about. They can talk about this crisis or the latest show they are watching. The point is connecting with people in our community who could use it the most.

Send a press release, post a tweet, send an email to the lists you have. Ask people to forward it to other people. Let us know if you launch the campaign locally, so that we can amplify it on our social media channels.



[\*\*Learn more about the initiative and get sample social media posts and a sample press release at our website.\*\*](#)

## New Resources Available at NYSAC.org/Covid-19

We've recently updated the COVID-19 section of our website. As part of the update we've included a new [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section featuring common questions we've received from counties for which we have received answers from the State.

Additionally, we're continuing to collect examples of innovative solutions that counties are deploying in response to the COVID-19 in the [Counties Innovating](#) section of our website. We're now breaking these stories out by topic so if you're interested in procurement, or public safety or communications, you can find articles by that topic.

## New DOL Unemployment PSA

The Department of Labor released a new PSA today that provides information on how to apply for unemployment benefits and reassures New Yorkers if their unemployment filing is delayed, they will still receive full unemployment benefits.



## Federal Update: 30 Days to Stop the Spread

On Monday, March 16, the White House Coronavirus Task Force issued guidelines to help protect Americans during the global coronavirus outbreak. Yesterday, the White House Coronavirus Task Force issued revised guidelines – **30 Days to Slow the Spread** – through Thursday, April 30 (an additional 30 days).

Even if you are young and otherwise healthy, you are at risk, and your activities can increase the risk of contracting the Coronavirus for others. Everyone can do their part. The recommendations are simple to follow but will have a resounding impact on public health.



## Additional Helpful Federal Resources

**Critical Infrastructure Workforce Guidelines:** On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued updated critical infrastructure guidance in response to the COVID-19 emergency. DHS issues revised guidance on March 28<sup>th</sup> (See [Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response](#)). The [guidance](#), and accompanying list, is intended to help State, local, tribal and territorial officials as they work to protect their communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. The list is advisory in nature and is not a federal directive or standard.

**Coronavirus Fact vs. Myth:** Rumors can easily circulate within communities during a crisis. FEMA setup a [website](#) to help the public distinguish between rumors and facts regarding the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

**Fraud & Scam Protection:** The Department of Justice is remaining vigilant in detecting, investigating, and prosecuting wrongdoing related to the crisis. Find out how you can protect yourself and helpful resources on DOJ's Coronavirus Fraud Prevention [website](#). The Federal Trade Commission has also established a [website](#) with helpful information to help consumers avoid coronavirus-related scams.

**Mental Health Resources:** Natural disasters – including such pandemics as the coronavirus outbreak – can be overwhelming and also can seriously affect emotional health. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline – 1-800-985-5990 (or text TalkWithUs to 66746) – provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to anyone who is seeking help in coping with the mental or emotional effects caused by developments related to the coronavirus pandemic. Learn more about the Disaster Distress Helpline [here](#).