

# Gov. Pritzker Issues Disaster Proclamation to Build on State's COVID-19 Response, Unlock Additional Federal Resources

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**CHICAGO** — Building on the state's robust and coordinated response to COVID-19, Governor JB Pritzker issued a disaster proclamation today to unlock additional federal resources and help the state prepare for the potential of further spread. Issuing a disaster proclamation is the method of declaring a state of emergency in the state of Illinois, which 13 states across the United States have entered into.

“As we’ve said from the beginning, the state of Illinois will use every tool at our disposal to respond to this virus, and this is the next step in that commitment,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “We stand ready to put the full weight of state government in preparation for a full-fledged response when needed and will continue to update the public regularly, responsibly and honestly as the situation evolves.”

The proclamation formalizes emergency procedures already underway across state government by activating the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), physically bringing together decision-makers from every state agency and the state’s highly qualified mutual aid network to deploy resources as necessary during this public health threat.

State and local partners benefit from a disaster proclamation in the following ways:

- Allows federal reimbursement for state response costs
- Allows use of State Disaster Relief Fund, covering direct state costs and reimbursements to Illinois National Guard and mutual aid groups
- Allows use of the state’s mutual aid network, groups of public safety response professionals — including hundreds of health care providers and management professionals, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians and disaster response professionals — that are available to deploy to areas of shortage
- Authorizes the Governor to activate Illinois National Guard reservists, some of whom may be doctors and nurses
- Allows expedited procurement should it be necessary
- Authorizes additional executive authorities to protect public health and safety

Since January, the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois Emergency Management Agency have been working with their local counterparts across the state to prepare for additional cases as expected.

Also Monday, IDPH and the Chicago Department of Public Health announced four new COVID-19 cases in Illinois, bringing the total to 11. (See attached medical information.) All four cases are in good condition. The first two cases in the state announced last month have recovered without known transmission to additional individuals. The remaining patients are in isolation either at home or in a hospital. As with every case, our federal, state, county and hospital-level public health officials are working to actively identify any individuals who came into contact with the patients.

## **HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

IDPH is currently operating three testing labs statewide – in Chicago, Springfield and Carbondale. These state labs meet current need, and commercial testing expansion is anticipated this week.

In addition, a sample of patients who present with flu-like symptoms are being tested at 15 hospitals statewide: seven hospitals in Cook County, three hospitals in other areas of northern Illinois, three hospitals in Central Illinois and two hospitals in Southern Illinois to monitor for the presence of the virus in our communities.

Gov. Pritzker has been in communication with the CEOs of the largest insurance companies in Illinois. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, UnitedHealthcare, Aetna and Cigna have announced they will waive the costs for COVID-19 testing. Medicaid and Medicare are also covering testing costs.

## **PREVENTION FOR THE PUBLIC**

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, public health officials urge the general public to take the same precautions as during flu season — with renewed vigilance:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Clean often touched surfaces frequently
- Maintain social distance (3 feet) between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing
- Avoid visiting long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes, especially if you're sick
- Stay home if you do not feel well
- Plan a safe visit to the doctor if you experience any symptoms

Vulnerable populations – including people 60 years and older or those with certain health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, and weakened immune systems – are recommended to avoid large gatherings.

The Illinois Department of Public Health has a statewide COVID-19 hotline and website to answer any questions from the public or to report a suspected case: call 1-800-889-3931 or visit [IDPH.illinois.gov](https://idph.illinois.gov).