

Bristow, Stuart Call for Increased Funding to Help Local Health Departments Battle COVID-19

May 4 2020 2:27 PM



ALTON – To help protect the health and wellness of Metro East communities and to ensure that local health departments are properly funded while fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, state Reps. Monica Bristow, D-Alton, and Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville, are calling for increased funding for local health departments in downstate Illinois.

“Our local health departments are vital to the wellness of our community, even when we are not facing a public health crisis. Properly funding our health departments will help lay the foundation to reopen our economy and prioritize the health of our downstate communities,” said Bristow. “The employees of these departments are on the frontlines of this pandemic, working with other first responders and emergency personnel in the battle against COVID-19. While we likely face an unprecedented budget crisis in our state, one requiring very serious decisions, giving local health departments the resources they need will ensure they can continue to work to protect us now and in the recovery after.”

“Our local health departments’ resources are undoubtedly being stretched thin due to the coronavirus pandemic. Giving them proper funding and support will strengthen our communities’ response to this crisis, helping protect the health of residents and putting us on the path to reopening the economy,” said Stuart. “There are tough decisions to be made in every budget, especially in times of uncertainty, and the health of our Metro East communities must be a top priority now and into the future.”

Bristow and Stuart are calling for additional funding for Local Health Protection Grants that provide resources to certified local health departments to maintain basic levels of protection for residents against infectious disease, food protection, safety of water supplies, and private sewage disposal. The Illinois Department of Public Health distributes funds to departments based on a formula that includes population and poverty levels within each local jurisdiction.

These grants help local health departments in the essential services they perform to protect the public’s health in their respective area.

“Local health departments have been existing on scarce resources even prior to the COVID-19 crisis. Many are now facing extraordinary added costs, including added personnel, supplies, and personal protective equipment for employees as they work to protect the public’s health,” said Tom Hughes, executive director of the Illinois Public Health Association. “Without increasing the funds needed to properly serve their communities, health departments will have serious trouble maintaining the fight against this pandemic. It is imperative that our state support and protect workers on the frontlines of this crisis.”

To find the most recent information about resources and information regarding COVID-19 in Illinois, visit <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov> or call the Illinois Department of Public Health at 1-800-889-3931.

Contact Bristow’s office at 618-465-5900 (messages are checked frequently), by direct message on Facebook.com/RepMBristow, or by emailing RepMBristow@gmail.com.

