

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE WATCHUNG MAYOR KEITH BALLA

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

Update - March 22, 2020

This letter contains the critical information for the websites to obtain information on a regular basis. This public health emergency is rapidly evolving and we want to ensure we provide our residents with timely and factual updates.

Over the past 7 days the situation with coordination and responses to the COVID-19 has been fast paced and fluid every day. Because of the uncertainty of the COVID-19 outbreak, certain community actions to keep people healthy and reduce exposure to COVID-19 have been implemented to slow the spread of the disease. To protect the safety and health of our residents from the spread of COVID-19 we responded by declaring a State of Emergency for the Borough of Watchung on March 17, 2020.

We receive daily updates from the Governor's Office and Somerset County on additional protective measures being implemented. We continually post and update the information on the Borough website to keep our residents informed.

We have activated our Watchung Community Emergency Response Team ("CERT") team, which operates out of Borough Hall. The Watchung Office of Emergency Management (OEM) led by Carolyn Solon has daily briefings with Mayor Balla and emergency responders of Watchung, as well as continually updating the Somerset County OEM.

We have also established the Watchung Help Line 908-745-2111 for anyone who needs assistance in Watchung. Our help line has information to answer questions and provide referrals for the needs of our residents as well as replacement supplies for our first responders.

Our Police, Fire, Rescue Squad and Public Works departments in conjunction with our OEM instituted situation action plans regarding protocols and procedures to protect our emergency responders, provide for equipment and supplies and continuing operations to protect our residents, businesses and visitors.

Mayor Keith Balla, Borough Administrator James Damato and OEM Coordinator Carolyn Solon are at Borough Hall every day to coordinate and communicate with

Federal, State, County, other Municipal officials and our Watchung staff as we work through this situation. Saturday March 21, 2020, Mayor Balla participated in a conference call with Senators Menendez and Booker to express needs for relief, finances, supplies and testing within municipalities in New Jersey and discuss what action the U.S. Congress is planning to assist individuals, businesses and local governments.

I must stress that the purpose of the school, government, library, business closings and Governor's Stay at home Order is for individuals to refrain from meeting with persons outside of their household and limit the community spread.

We have confirmed cases of individuals who live and work in Watchung who have tested positive to the virus. The health department officials conduct the investigation to determine any individuals who may have elevated risk of exposure and communicate directly with those individuals.

In response to the seriousness and health risk posed by COVID 19 the Governor instituted Executive Orders ("EO") 107 and 108 on Saturday March 21, 2020, which are posted on our website www.watchungnj.gov.

I strongly encourage all residents to read and follow the EO 107 and 108 www.nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/. Executive Order 107 states that "All New Jersey residents shall remain home or at their place of residence unless... When in public, individuals must practice social distancing and stay six feet apart..." I emphasize for everyone's health and well-being that the words used by the Governor of "shall" and "must" are not optional.

Everyone must follow these EO's from our Governor as they are for everyone's protection.

Please be thoughtful, considerate and kind in our efforts to protect everyone. I recommend taking precautions and wash your hands frequently with soap and water, avoid close contact with others and use proper cleaning methods and solutions that help stop any spread of the virus.

Daily health precautions that can prevent the spread of the COVID-19 and other diseases:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time.
- When soap and water are not available, individuals should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and discard.
- Do not reuse tissues after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched frequently.
- Stay home
- Practice social distancing or avoid contact with others.

To stay informed, residents can visit the following:

NJ hotline for COVID-19 info:

1-800-222-1222

NJ Health COVID-19

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

CDC COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2pnUkXH9DkLSOQAQccltovBHlkzd3M0wYtzfvit8THk-Yc-LHqOmf-kig>

Somerset County COVID-19

<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-health-safety/health-department/services/disease-prevention/novel-coronavirus-2019-2641>

NJ Health: Isolation vs. Quarantine

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID-19-IsolationVsQuarantine.pdf>

coronavirus@co.somerset.nj.us

www.coronavirus.gov, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
www.njgov/health State Health Department
www.who.int. World Health Organization

I respectfully request that everyone work together, be patient, compassionate, considerate and kind as we work through this pandemic. We are working with our local, county and state Boards of Health and seek to provide the information to best protect all of our citizens and alleviate any panic and stress from misinformation.

I will provide updates as we are updated with new information or procedures.

Thank you for following the directives to best protect our residents. I pray that you all may remain safe and healthy.



Mayor Keith S. Balla