



**Rhode Island Department of Health**  
3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908 | [www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov)



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### **COVID-19 Media Update Scheduled for Today**

#### Media Availability

Governor Gina M. Raimondo and Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), will be available today (March 9th) at 4:30 p.m. in Conference Room 2A at the Department of Administration (1 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908) to discuss additional protections and resources available to Rhode Island workers in response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). They will also be discussing work with Rhode Island nursing homes to help protect residents. A Spanish interpreter will be available.

#### Guidance related to employers and employment

- The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training has set up a COVID-19 Assistance Line and email address (401-462-2020; [dlt.covid19@dlt.ri.gov](mailto:dlt.covid19@dlt.ri.gov)). They are intended to provide support to people regarding COVID-19 and employment issues. The phone line is staffed Monday to Friday during business hours.
- It's extremely important right now that we do all we can do to limit or prevent the spread of COVID-19. If you are sick, stay home from work.
- If your place of business remains open and you are unable to work, you may be eligible for Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI).
- If your place of business is closed, or you are told not to come in, and you are not getting paid, you may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance (UI).
- Most Rhode Island private sector workers are eligible for earned sick and safe leave. The benefits provided by this leave enable employees to take time off from work to care for themselves or family members that have been impacted by COVID-19.

#### General guidance

- If you have traveled anywhere internationally (or anywhere overnight in the U.S.) in the last 14 days, monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms include fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- For people who have traveled to China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, or Japan, in addition to monitoring yourself for symptoms, self-quarantine for 14 days. That means do not go to work or school and stay at home.

- Whenever possible, avoid close personal contact with people in public. When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs. [Additional guidance](#) is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Although Rhode Island has the testing capacity it needs, people without symptoms should not be tested for COVID-19. Testing individuals with no symptoms is not recommended by CDC.
- Early data suggest that older adults are twice as likely to experience serious COVID-19 illness. RIDOH is reiterating CDC's guidance for people older than 60 years of age:
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
  - Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
  - More information is [available from CDC](#).
- Last Friday RIDOH officials held a call with the leadership of nursing homes throughout Rhode Island to discuss enhanced measures to protect residents. Facilities have been instructed to:
  - Restrict visitor hours.
  - Not allow people to visit if they are younger than 18 years of age or are feeling sick or experiencing any of the following symptoms: cough, fever, chills, runny nose, stuffy nose, sore throat, or shortness of breath.
  - Actively screen staff, visitors, vendors, and all other people who enter facilities for illness and COVID-19 risks (i.e., travel history, or exposure to someone under investigation for COVID-19). People who have traveled internationally in the last 14 days will be asked to not enter facilities.
  - Only allow residents to leave for medical appointments (as opposed to nonessential appointments, such as an appointment with a hairdresser or a visit to a family member). This policy is to keep residents safe by preventing a person from getting ill and bringing an illness back into the facility. In special circumstances, exceptions can be made from this policy, given the importance of mental and emotional health to the overall wellness of older adults. Families should work with nursing home administrators regarding special circumstances.
- There are many respiratory illnesses circulating in Rhode Island, such as the flu and the common cold. Having respiratory symptoms does not mean that you have COVID-19.
- People are at higher risk for COVID-19 if they have symptoms of the virus (cough, fever, shortness of breath) AND if they were a contact of a positive case of COVID-19 (or have traveled to country with community transmission, such as China, Italy, South Korea, Iran, and Japan).
- Someone is considered a contact if they have had direct, face-to-face contact with a person with COVID-19.
- People who think they have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider. These people should not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling a healthcare provider (unless they are experiencing a medical emergency).

- People with general questions about COVID-19 can visit [www.health.ri.gov/covid](http://www.health.ri.gov/covid) or call **401-222-8022. This is the COVID-19 Hotline** that RIDOH has available to the public. (After hours people are being directed to call 211.)
- Everyone can help stop the spread of viruses in Rhode Island.
  - Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same.
  - Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel.
  - Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
  - Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
  - Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.
  - Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.