

For Release:
March 18, 2020

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New Jersey Expands COVID-19 Call Center Options

Governor Phil Murphy, the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, the New Jersey Department of Health, and the United Ways of New Jersey announced today that NJ 211 has been activated to help handle COVID-19 related calls from New Jersey residents.

All residents with questions or concerns about COVID-19 and resources available to them can call 2-1-1. NJ 211 is New Jersey's statewide, comprehensive, information and referral service operated by United Ways of New Jersey.

Residents call also text NJCOVID to 898-211 to receive text information and stay informed. To receive live text assistance, residents can text their zip code to 898-211.

These enhancements to 211 will supplement, rather than replace, the existing COVID-19 hotline, operated by the New Jersey Poison Control Center. State residents with questions about COVID-19 illness can continue to call the previously shared numbers for the COVID-19 hotline, but they can also call 211 to get answers about their COVID-19 questions.

Additionally, the Department of Health has a COVID-19 website with resources including CDC updates, guidance for schools, colleges, businesses, long-term care facilities, health care professionals and public health professionals. The website is available at <https://nj.gov/health/coronavirus>.

Local health departments, health care providers, and medical facility staff should continue to contact the Communicable Disease Service at the New Jersey Department of Health with COVID-19 questions.

About NJ 2-1-1

The statewide information and referral service began in 2002 when the United Ways of New Jersey spearheaded efforts to give people-in-need an easy way to find health and human services by encouraging the Board of Public Utilities to designate the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership as the sole administrator of the three digit dialing code. Statewide coverage began in 2005. In 2017 alone, the NJ 2-1-1 Partnership provided resource assistance to over 455,000 people who called 2-1-1 or visited our website. With roughly 3,000 agencies in the organization's resource database and over 10,000 programs and services listed, NJ 2-1-1 provides the public with front door access to nonprofit, government and faith-based services, as well as disaster response information.

Supporting Individuals and Families with Children:

Child Care

- Waiving parent co-pays in state's child care subsidy for parents who request it due to impacts from COVID-19;
- Providing an additional \$100 per child per month to child care providers for children in the State child care subsidy program to help child care centers remain open during this critical time to support working parents, emergency and essential personnel; and
- Making grant funding available to child care centers to support cleaning supplies or services.

Cash, Shelter and Food Assistance

- Automatically extending for 60 days WorkFirst New Jersey cash assistance to individuals whose case is up for renewal in March or April;
- Extending all Emergency Assistance cases through April 30;
- Deeming the current state of emergency as a good cause exemption for the work requirements in WorkFirst New Jersey and SNAP and suspending all adverse actions for non-compliance;
- Convening New Jersey food banks and community pantries to focus on preparedness planning and distribution; and
- Working with homeless shelters to address cleaning and self-isolation policies.

NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid

- Covering COVID-19 testing, visits for testing, and testing-related services at no cost;
- Waiving costs for COVID-19 testing, visits for testing, and testing-related services in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP);
- Covering 90-day supplies of prescriptions for maintenance medications and early refills of prescriptions in Medicaid and CHIP; and
- Directing hospitals to waive cost sharing for uninsured individuals who are eligible for charity care for medically necessary testing and testing-related services for the COVID-19 virus.

Supporting Older Residents

- Mobilizing nurse care managers at Medicaid health plans to call high risk populations to identify and address their critical needs including supplies such as durable medical equipment and food;
- Allowing older residents receiving prescription drugs through Medicaid or the state prescription drug assistance program (PAAD and Senior Gold) to refill their prescriptions early and receive 90-day supplies of maintenance medications;
- Working with our county partners to ensure that those receiving home-delivered meals continue to have access to food;