



# CATTARAUGUS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Cattaraugus County  
Health Department

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Established 1923

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## CATTARAUGUS COUNTY DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Cattaraugus County, through the combined actions of the Legislature Chairman, Howard VanRensselaer, and the County Administrator, John R. Searles, has declared a State of Emergency in response to the 2019-novel Coronavirus effective at 12P.M. Sunday, March 15, 2020. At this time, the primary purpose of the state of emergency is to support the Public Health Director in his decision making regarding the health and safety of the residents of Cattaraugus County.

Cattaraugus County officials stress there remain zero positive cases of this virus identified in Cattaraugus County. However as three positive cases have been identified in Erie County, it is imperative to err on the side of caution through support of social-distancing measures as we learn how this virus reacts. This is not a time for fear and panic but rather planning and precaution.

To implement a measure to limit community transmission, the Public Health Director Dr. Kevin Watkins met with numerous Cattaraugus County school superintendents on March 13, 2020, to discuss issues related to the 2019-novel Coronavirus and the possibility of an extended dismissal of students. Governor Cuomo, through his executive order of March 13, 2020, placed authority for school dismissal at the local level, making a county level state of emergency necessary to support the dismissal of Cattaraugus County schools.

Any school district which decides to close pursuant to the local state of emergency declaration must first consult with Cattaraugus County health department and also exhaust any available time including snow days and vacation days. Cattaraugus County Health officials recommend schools in Cattaraugus County dismiss students as part of a community intervention for social distancing.

In the interim, Cattaraugus County officials are continuing to monitor and respond to all 2019-novel Coronavirus concerns and remain in close communication with school districts.

This State of Emergency does not in any way impact travel at this time. County government operations will continue unchanged unless otherwise advised.

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