



**Seneca County EMA Situation Report #35**  
**COVID-19 Response**  
**April 29, 2020**  
**County EOC Status: Monitoring**  
**State EOC: Activated**

Distribution List: Villages, Townships, Seneca County Elected Officials, City of Tiffin Elected Officials, City of Fostoria Elected Officials, Fire Chiefs, Law Enforcement, LEPC/HS and Mental Health Recovery Services

**Ohio**

**Confirmed Cases:** 16,128 (+473 in last 24 hours)  
**Probable:** 702  
**Confirmed Deaths:** 856  
**Probable Deaths:** 81

**Seneca County**

**Total Cases:** 14  
**Confirmed Cases:** 5  
**Deaths:** 1  
**Recovered:** 8

**Resources:**

**Ohio ODH:** [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov)

**CDC:** [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

**Seneca County General Health District:** [senecahealthdistrict.org](https://senecahealthdistrict.org)

**Executive Summary**

**GOVERNOR:** The Governor today announced the largest single acquisition of PPE in Ohio history as the state was able to secure over 4.1 million items including masks, gowns, face masks and more that is being distributed to the county EMA offices for them to prioritize among those in their communities who need it the most.

After saying yesterday that some graduations could proceed, DeWine today clarified that mass gatherings cannot happen, and graduations can only happen if they are ten people or less. He said the Department of Education will be working on publishing guidance, which includes suggestions of doing virtual graduations or drive-thru ceremonies.

Lt. Gov. Jon Husted clarified the face mask rules saying that all employees are required to wear a face mask. He said that the exceptions to this are if it is against the law to do so, or it is against industry best practices, if it is a violation of safety policies, if someone is alone in an enclosed workspace, or any practical reason for why an employee cannot wear a mask.

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**RESPONSIBLE RESTART WEBINAR:** Governor DeWine and a number of agency directors today joined on a webinar to outline the process and guidance for health care facilities as they look to begin serving patients with non-COVID related ailments. A summary of the webinar and slides used during the presentation can be found by [clicking here](#).

Governor DeWine reports that there is now an email set up to coordinate donations and offers to help. This address is [together@governor.ohio.gov](mailto:together@governor.ohio.gov).

Dr. Acton reports there is a new coronavirus interactive dashboard at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home/dashboard>.

### **Seneca County**

The Seneca County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution last Thursday morning that formalizes about \$2 million in budget reductions.

During the meeting, which was held digitally through Zoom and Facebook Live and included about 60 participants, the board continued budget discussions.

The board's plan, which started being implemented last week, includes 20-percent decreases to salaries and wages in the General Fund to help meet the revenue shortfall created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cut in salaries is coupled with the zeroing out of travel budgets and the halving of supply budgets. The commissioners also instituted a hiring freeze, are in the process of re-evaluating and canceling many contracts and are not planning to undertake any capital projects without outside funding.

The board's initial goal for the General Fund was to cut about \$2 million from this year's budget. According to the approved resolution, the number for General Fund cuts was \$1,909,728.48. This does not include other savings, such as utility costs being lowered as many offices are closing on Fridays for the foreseeable future.

The county also is expecting to receive about \$76,000 from the Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation as part of the agency's rollout today of \$172 million in dividend checks to Ohio's public employers.

The resolution formalizing budgetary reductions was necessary because the Seneca County Budget Commission reduced its General Fund revenue projection for 2020 by \$2 million earlier this month.

As a result of these decreases, many county offices announced last week that they would shut down on Fridays until further notice.

One office that will remain open is the Seneca County Board of Elections, so staff can continue to run this month's Presidential Primary Election.

If you have questions about any office hours, please contact the office in question. Many employees and offices are willing to be flexible on days and hours to help residents complete the necessary county business.

In other business, the commissioners discussed a committee that is forming to start discussions of rebooting Seneca County's economy. The group, which is chaired by Seneca County Health Commissioner Beth Schweitzer, is to begin meeting soon and will include public and private sector

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leaders. The members of the group will begin planning how the county can successfully re-open businesses and will work on interpreting and implementing the state's orders as the March Stay At Home Orders are loosened.

#### **Seneca County General Health District:**

The Health Commissioner clarified the Seneca County Coronavirus numbers as 14 total confirmed cases of the COVID19 virus which INCLUDES 5 currently ill (one of those currently hospitalized), 8 recovered from the illness and 1 deceased due to complications of COVID19.

Seneca County Health Commissioner will produce Facebook Live videos with updates from the Health District. This will occur at 10:30 on Wednesdays. Videos will be archived on Facebook and can be viewed live on the Health Department's and Commissioner's FB pages.

#### **Emergency Management Agency**

We would like to thank everyone who has donated PPE and other supplies to our health care workers and first responders through the EMA. We are continuing to accept donations of the following items: N95 masks, surgical/procedure masks, gowns, goggles, face shields, eye protection, disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer, bulk disinfectant, bulk hand soap, Isopropyl alcohol, Lysol concentrated cleaners and thermometers. The Donation Center at the Public Safety building will be accepting donations from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. M-F. These resources will be prioritized and dispensed on the directive of the Seneca County General Health District.

#### **Blood Collection**

The American Red Cross now faces a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations in response to the coronavirus outbreak. **Blood donation is considered an essential service** to ensure the health of the community and is listed as an exception in the state order. While everyone is being asked to avoid mass gatherings, it's very important to note that blood drives are **not** considered "mass gatherings."

#### **Mental Health and Recovery Board of Seneca, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties**

The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board contracts with Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services who are making the attached resource available to our healthcare workers and first responders during this time.

During these uncertain times, our office may be closed to the public, however, we are still hard at work to ensure that community member's needs are met. Our board staff is ready to help you navigate the resources. Call our office at 419.448.0640 for any questions regarding behavioral health.

#### **City of Tiffin**

Declarations and orders by the Mayor and City Council can be found at [tiffinohio.gov](http://tiffinohio.gov).

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### **Job and Family Services**

For the week ending April 18, 2020, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 109,369 initial jobless claims to the U.S. Dept. of Labor. The number of initial jobless claims filed in Ohio over the last five weeks stands at nearly 1 million (964,566).

To put that in perspective, the total for the last five weeks of claims is 249,054 more than the combined total of 715,512 for the last two years. Over these last five weeks, ODJFS has distributed more than \$926 million in unemployment compensation payments to more than 376,000 claimants. ODJFS urges individuals to file their claims online, if possible, at [unemployment.ohio.gov](http://unemployment.ohio.gov).

### **Education**

Ohio School Districts received notice from Governor Mike DeWine that all public, community, private and parochial schools are to remain closed for the remainder of the school year. With the ongoing status and developments of the Coronavirus pandemic, this announcement places additional responsibilities on the schools to provide reasonable educational services to the respective district students. Additionally, concerns remain as to whether schools will be able to open in the fall as is customary.

Through the leadership efforts of district superintendents, schools have been proactive in addressing the impact of the Coronavirus on student populations, teachers, parents and communities. Substantial efforts are being made to providing alternative services and learning opportunities for students. Superintendent's have collaborated with the North Central Ohio Educational Service Center through multiple weekly video conferencing meetings to discuss options and maintain consistency between school districts.

School districts are also attempting to address options to allow for graduation for senior high school students despite the constraints of social distancing and congregating of people. Administrators recognize the importance of traditional events typically held at this time of the year such as award programs, proms, and the "symbolic" graduation ritual. With graduation being the pinnacle for students and parents, districts are researching options to provide suitable forums to allow student graduation. Unfortunately, the necessary coronavirus restrictions limits the options that are available.

### **OSS Solid Waste District**

Due to the health and safety concerns involving the COVID-19 epidemic for local citizens, contracted businesses, OSS staff, and assisting community service workers and volunteer groups, the District is canceling all spring recycling collection events.

- **Household Hazardous Waste Collection – Saturday, May 2 – CANCELLED**
- **Television & Electronics Collection – Saturday, May 9 – CANCELLED**
- **Ottawa County Appliance Collection – Saturday, June 13 – CANCELLED**

The District plans to hold the scheduled fall recycling collection events. Fall collections will be held to

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accept materials for household hazardous waste, televisions and electronics, appliances and tires. Fall dates and information can be found at [recycleoss.org](http://recycleoss.org).

### **Economic Recovery**

After taking Tuesday off, the House 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force resumed hearings today starting with a fitness center owner whose opening day of the company was the day the closure order came down from the Governor. Darin Ward said while it's challenging, he understands the need for health and safety.

Ward also noted that he is a firefighter and paramedic. Answering questions from the committee as a first responder from the Mahoning Valley, a COVID hotspot, he said it has been very challenging to be with these individuals as they transport them to the hospital. He explained that most are extremely scared they might not make it as many struggle with difficulty breathing.

Several representatives from COSI Science Center in Columbus explained the unique position that they are in trying to balance the logic of science, but also the struggle to be able to open their doors again as a museum. A pathogens specialist, Dr. Frederick Bertley, said his focus was immediately on the preservation of their facility. After laying off 85% of their workforce, Stephen White with COSI says they are feeling more confident that they will be able to come back, and as a result he has begun doing more public awareness about the dangers of the pathogen in the local media.

COSI also told the committee that they are preparing processes for social distancing in their exhibits that have been traditionally designed to allow for kids to freely roam and play within the space.

Returning to the committee to further discuss the child care limitations, Kathleen Bryan from Cincinnati warned that since the announcement they are seeing signs of parents opting to not return to their jobs because their children still have to be home. Some of these companies that are able to return to work on May 4th are not considered essential workforce and they won't qualify for pandemic child care centers. As a result Bryan said parents are facing difficult choices of not returning to work, or even worse, leaving their child home alone so they can get a paycheck again.

Bryan also told committee members that according to her resources, there has yet to be a single positive COVID-19 case within pandemic centers. She says that other child facilities need to know a date so they are able to get protocols in place and acquire PPE.

The task force also heard from two different dog-based companies, one that trains service animals as well as a pet grooming salon. Jenni Lough Watson, owner of Greatdogs LLC, trains dogs to respond to the medical needs of their owner. Because of travel restrictions, Watson will have to revisit trainings for the dogs currently in her program, and will also face a shortage for of trained dogs in 2022 because she has been unable to secure puppies to train. This means people who are relying on her for a service dog to help them respond to medical episodes will have to wait several more years before she is able to help them, or they will have to turn to a company elsewhere.

Misty Gieczys, owner of Designer Paws Salons, explained to committee members that grooming is not simply for the appearance of a dog, their work is able to identify infections or other issues with dogs and inform the owner so they are able to take care of the problem. Because groomers see a pet much more regularly than a veterinarian, they are often the first line when it comes to alerting an owner of medical issues. She also told committee members that since they are not allowed to be open, but vet

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offices are, they are losing a significant amount of business to the vet offices who offer grooming services.

At the conclusion of today's meeting, Chairman Zeltwanger said the task force will not be meeting tomorrow and will resume Friday, May 1st at 10am.

**This daily situational report will be sent around 4 p.m. each day M-F and as needed over the weekend. If you wish to update or add information to this report, please get it to the EMA at [jspahr@senecacountyohio.gov](mailto:jspahr@senecacountyohio.gov) by 2:30 p.m. each day.**

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