

President Trump Declares National Emergency

Today, March 13, 2020, President Trump announced that his Administration is declaring a national emergency over the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This action will provide access to roughly \$50 billion for states and localities to address the crisis, and provide increasing flexibility to hospitals and other health clinics to serve patients.

The declaration made today will allow the administration to utilize the Stafford Act, which authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide various forms of public assistance to support state and local efforts to respond to this public health emergency. FEMA can use this funding to help states in the coordination of response activities, and other measures like the construction of medical facilities and transporting patients.

During the press conference, the President explained a new public-private partnership between the federal government and private corporations including Target, Roche, Walgreens, Walmart, and CVS, among others. In the coming days, a new website, powered by Google will be launched aimed at directing anyone who may be feeling symptomatic on how to proceed with the process of getting tested for COVID-19. Retailers, including Target, Walgreens, Walmart, and CVS, will be opening their parking lots for “drive-up” testing clinics. We will follow up once more information is available on the proposed website and where retailers listed above will be offering drive-up testing.

Small Business Administration Coronavirus Update

Many Easterseals affiliates are considered small businesses. As such, we wanted to shine a light on the steps that the Small Business Administration (SBA) has begun to take as COVID-19 becomes a national emergency. The SBA recently released guidance for businesses and employers on how to respond to COVID-19.

- The plan can be found by [clicking here](#).

Of specific interest to affiliates:

1. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan program -- Provides small businesses with working capital loans of up to \$2 million that can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. For counseling on applying for these loans, and for more information please visit: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>.

2. Capital Access – Incidents can strain a small business’s financial capacity to make payroll, maintain inventory and respond to market fluctuations (both sudden drops and surges in demand). Businesses should prepare by exploring and testing their capital access options so they have what they need when they need it. For more information on capital access please visit: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans>

3. Changing Market Demand – Easterseals and its affiliates provide services to individuals with disabilities, the elderly, veterans, and their families. Many of these people fall into the “high-risk” category of COVID-19. As a result, affiliates may be experiencing a change in demand for services. Depending on the incident, there may be access controls or movement restrictions established which can impede your customers from reaching your business. Additionally, there may be public concerns about public exposure to an incident and they may decide not to go to your business out of concern of exposing themselves to greater risk. Chat with SBA’s Resources Partners and District Offices if you would like advice or assistance in crafting a plan specific to your situation to help navigate any rapid changes in demand: <https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance>

Capitol Hill Update

As of 7pm ET this evening (March 13, 2020), the House of Representatives announced that it had come to an agreement with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on a large coronavirus response package. The House is expected to vote later tonight on the multibillion-dollar funding package which would ensure access to food assistance, nutrition programs, free testing, and address paid work leave for people affected by the virus. The Senate has [postponed](#) its scheduled recess next week, and it’s likely that the Administration will continue negotiations with Democrats to pass a broadly bipartisan package that provides certainty for employers, at-risk workers, and the public at large.

Additional Information

As this week comes to a close, Easterseals continues to monitor the situation closely and again encourages you to follow the guidance of the CDC and your state and local officials. We also want to share this helpful brief from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) on how states and the federal government can expand Medicaid coverage for purposes of responding to the coronavirus outbreak.

- For additional information, here is a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document from CMS to aid Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) agencies in their response to the outbreak.
- Please continue to monitor the CDC’s website for updated information, including frequently asked questions. You can view the [CDC’s website](#) here.