

Erie County offers updates on resources, recreation

The Erie County Department of Health and Erie County made the following announcements earlier this week.

Health Care System Mobilization

Over the last several weeks, our local health care systems have been planning and preparing on all fronts for an expected surge in COVID-19 cases in our area. Actions like the conversion of St. Joseph's Hospital by Catholic Health into a COVID-19 facility and the establishment of a dedicated post-acute care unit for COVID-19 patients at Elderwood in Amherst are just some of the examples of steps being taken to make our local capacity match the anticipated demand for health care.

We appreciate all of the efforts from our partners in health care, law enforcement and emergency services during this unprecedented time.

Senior Services and Meal Delivery

Seniors in Erie County can contact our Department of Senior Services for Meals on Wheels delivery. Senior Services staff members are coordinating with Meals on Wheels to ensure meal delivery to all seniors in need.

There is a suggested donation for meal delivery, but do not let cost get in the way of asking for this help. If you have concerns about not having enough food, call 716-858-8526 weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

9-1-1

ECDOH wants to remind all residents that 9-1-1 is an emergency service – not a help line or delivery service. Call or text 9-1-1 only for true emergencies. Examples of emergencies include:

- ✓ A fire
- ✓ A crime, especially if in progress
- ✓ A car crash, especially if someone is injured
- ✓ A medical emergency, especially symptoms that require immediate medical attention

Call your doctor for medical advice if you are feeling sick. The best medical advice for you comes from your own health care provider. Use 2-1-1 for free referrals to human and social service agencies, or basic needs.

Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry

Erie County Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Troy Schinzel joined Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz for Tuesday's live video briefing.

"We want our parks to remain open as a safe space for our residents to enjoy responsibly," Schinzel said. "But if they become too overcrowded and visitors aren't acting responsibly, we may be forced to close them down to protect public health."

There are more than 10,000 acres in the Erie County Parks system across more than 40 areas. Erie County is encouraging residents to get outdoors to exercise and spend time with immediate household members.

Erie County Parks is offering the following suggestions and notifications about park usage and facility availability:

- If you arrive at a park and crowds are forming, choose a different park, a different trail, or return another time/day to visit.

- If parking lots are full, please do not park along roadsides or other undesignated areas. To protect your safety and that of others, please choose a different area to visit, or return another time or day when parking is available.

- Maintain distance from others while in places where people tend to congregate, such as parking lots, trailheads, and buildings.

- Do not litter or leave trash behind in our parks.

- As a general reminder, please be courteous to others at the parks. Have your dogs on leash at all times. Give people space when walking by. Be mindful of vehicle

traffic on opens roads and move to the shoulder while walking.

- If you or a family member isn't feeling well, please stay home. If you are elderly or have some other underlying condition making you more susceptible to sickness, please stay home.

We are in constant communication with our counterparts at town, city, NYS and other state parks to find out what they are doing, what is working or not, so that we can try to be as universal in park rules as possible.

You can find other Erie County Parks with our Parks Finder at www.erie.gov/parklocator

Closures and Limitations

Please consider not visiting the Eternal Flame at Chestnut Ridge or the Falls at Akron Falls. They are narrow trails that are experiencing a lot of foot traffic and you cannot practice proper distancing. They are both still going to be there this summer after we've made it through the peak. Please consider saving your visit for then.

- If you still choose to visit our parks, all buildings are closed and rentals have been cancelled through April 26.

There are also limited bathroom facilities and portable toilets available. This is to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, but also because many of the facilities are not heated and haven't yet been opened for the season.

- Playgrounds at all of our parks are closed. Please do not allow your children to use them and, if they do, please sanitize their hands immediately after contact with frequently touched surfaces.

- Disc golf at Como Lake, Ellicott, Emery and Chestnut Ridge will also be closed until further notice. Too many people have been playing attracting larger groups than are safe and there is no way for us to ensure baskets being touched by hundreds of people a day are sanitized.

- Our golf courses are also closed, but they ordinarily would not be available at this point in the year. As we get closer to the regular opening dates we'll revisit.

- The Ellicott Creek Island Bark Park is also closed seasonally because of the melt and wet spring conditions and opening will be revisited as we move forward. Black Rock Canal Bark Park is also closed.

- Basketball courts have been closed and rims have been removed.

- Tennis will remain open, but only to singles among immediate family members. When playing, please exercise distancing of at least 6 feet, especially related to adjacent courts. And remember to wash or sanitize your hands immediately after handling common surfaces like the gate latches or tennis balls.

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1 million masks received at Kaleida Health

Kaleida Health on Tuesday announced it has received its most recent planned shipment of protective face masks. Purchased from Foam Depot Inc., the 1 million surgical/procedural masks (pictured), are the types the hospital system is using with its "universal masking" guidelines. They are available for staff and visitors to use in all of our sites, including in hospitals, long-term care and home care.

"We continue to deliver on our promise to keep our workforce safe and healthy during this public health crisis," said Jody Lomeo, president and CEO of Kaleida Health. "I know I have said this previously, but it is important to point this out again: hospital supply chain systems are slammed right now, forcing us to compete for supplies, especially personal protective equipment (PPE) on an international level. That said, our purchasing team has been relentless in their pursuits, and they are running down every vendor, supply lead and partner that we have for equipment, supplies and PPE. I cannot thank that team and all of those involved for their hard work on this important issue."

Lomeo said Kaleida Health is following the state's lead in "continuing to stockpile supplies in preparation for the apex of the curve." Masks, gloves, gowns and durable equipment (ventilators, beds, IV pumps)



remain in high demand. Lomeo said the organization is working to acquire adequate supply for the upcoming surge. Depending on time of day and date of week, Kaleida Health remains at 2.0-3.0 weeks (not including masks) PPE available for its caregivers.

The N95 masks remain the biggest challenge for Kaleida Health and virtually every hospital system across the country. The purchasing and supply chain teams at Kaleida Health continue to work on tripling or quadrupling inventory over the next week or two.

Lomeo said, "Thanks to the incredible hard work, dedication and passion of our workforce, Kaleida Health continues to see and treat the majority of coronavirus cases in the community. In order for us to continue to be able to do that, we will work nonstop to ensure that our caregivers are safe and healthy. Our purchasing, procurement and supply chain efforts are laser-focused on our staff and their ability to take care of patients. A special note of gratitude goes out to all of those who have volunteered thus far to care for COVID-19 patients across the Kaleida Health system."

Photo courtesy of Joe Cascio, Kaleida Health

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