



Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected is Extended

Governor Ducey Extends Executive Order

Governor Ducey on Wednesday extended his “Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected” executive order until May 15th. Originally set to expire on April 30th, the Governor has been following guidance from the CDC and ADHS Director Cara Christ as the state combats the pandemic. According to his executive order, beginning on May 4th, businesses involving the sale of goods which were not previously classified as essential may return to selling their goods in a limited capacity. Effective May 8th, those businesses can begin offering their goods via in-store purchases as long as social distancing protocols requiring six feet of space between patrons is enforced. Dine-in options at restaurants are expected to be resumed in May, with a best case scenario of reopening by May 12th. When asked by reporters about other types of businesses, like gyms, barber shops and salons, the Governor said there is no specific timeline in place for reopening, but he is also hopeful they can re-open in the month of May. To read the full executive order click [here](#).

Session in Limbo Though Unlikely to Vote on Remaining Bills

After President Fann and Speaker Bowers devised a plan to call lawmakers back to the Capitol on May 1st to adjourn *sine die*, a group of ranking members raised vocal opposition that put the proposed plan in limbo. According to Capitol sources, the Republican led group wants three weeks of hearings on existing legislation. Democrat leaders in both chambers have said they want to end this year's legislative session without voting on any bills with the possible exception of Covid-19 related bills. To adjourn requires only the support of a majority of members in each chamber which makes it likely that legislators will end the legislative session without considering any of the many remaining bills. Speaker Bowers and President Fann acknowledged the amount of work that has gone into legislation that would have been passed but for the unexpected shut-down and have promised to fast-track those bills on the first day of next session. As more information becomes available, I will update you.

Governor Ducey Issues New Guidance on Elective Surgeries

The Governor issued an executive order removing restrictions on conducting elective surgeries for hospitals, health care facilities and providers that meet certain preparedness criteria. Under the new order, hospitals, dental offices and other health facilities can resume conducting elective surgeries on May 1st if they implement adequate safety measures including:

- Demonstrating greater than a 14-day supply of PPE.

- Ensuring adequate staffing and beds.
- Testing patients prior to surgery and all at-risk health care workers.
- Ensuring appropriate discharge plans for patients being transferred to nursing care facilities, including diagnostic testing for COVID-19.
- Implementing a universal symptom screening process for staff, patients, and visitors.
- Establishing an enhanced cleaning process for waiting areas.
- And prioritizing the restart of elective surgeries based on urgency.

Facilities that meet the specified standards will need to receive approval from the Department of Health Services before resuming elective surgeries. The order will be considered for repeal or revision every two weeks. The full executive order can be found [here](#).

Schools May Spend Funds On Health For Students

In a new legal opinion, State Attorney General Mark Brnovich concluded that school districts can use district funds for health-related expenditures as long as they meet specific legal criteria. The opinion concludes that Arizona school districts have the legal authority to make certain emergency health crisis expenditures on behalf of the community, as long as the expenditures: (1) Are statutorily authorized; (2) do not violate the Arizona Constitution's Gift Clause; and (3) comply with any other lawful restrictions or requirements imposed by the funding source. There are several funding sources potentially available for school districts to make health-related expenditures for COVID-19 purposes, including the federal CARES Act. The money from the CARES act is authorized for 12 purposes which can be found [here](#).

Other potential funding sources include:

- Gifts and donations (schools may not enter into agreements that restrict the board's ability to make future policy decisions in response to changing conditions)
- Student activity funds (subject to approval and oversight by the school district and input from students)
- Leasing school property for any lawful purpose (school buildings, grounds, buses, and equipment, to any person, group, or organization)

A copy of the full opinion can be found [here](#).

New Program Launched For Arizona Students

The Governor announced that the Arizona Department of Economic Security has obtained federal approval to start providing Pandemic School Meal Replacement Benefits to families whose children receive free or reduced-price meals at school. Presently, there are 600,000 Arizona students who rely on these meals including 186,000 students who also qualify for Nutrition Assistance. The new benefit is equal to two free meals -- breakfast and lunch for each eligible child. Families who are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) should be the first to receive the new benefit this week through their existing accounts. The Governor stated that DES will work with the Arizona Department of Education to reach families who do not receive SNAP benefits. Those families should receive Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards starting in early May. The meal replacement benefit is retroactive to March 16, when Arizona schools closed, and will be calculated based on the number of school days the child would have received meals at school, even if the students have been getting help from schools during the closure.

Below is the funding breakdown per eligible pupil:

- \$69 for March
- \$126 in April
- \$120 in May

Unemployment Claims Rise

With the U.S. unemployment rate soaring past 20 percent, officials reported that the state paid out a record \$151 million in unemployment benefits last week. JLBC found that 349,200 people have filed for unemployment insurance in the last four weeks which is expected to dramatically increase in the coming weeks. Last month, Arizonans filed 193,236 initial claims for unemployment insurance, a year-over-year increase of 1,214 percent -- the largest in the state's history. Additionally, the state lost 7,400 non-farm jobs in March, the first time such a loss was posted in that month since the Great Recession.

To continue receiving benefits, individuals must file weekly claims between 12:01 a.m. Sunday and 6 p.m. Friday. More information can be found [here](#).

Senator Contreras Diagnosed With COVID-19

In a press release, Assistant Senate Minority Leader Lupé Contreras announced that he and five other family members have contracted COVID-19. According to the release, he and his wife were tested after displaying symptoms of coughing, fever and headaches. He is the first Arizona lawmaker to publicly announce that he has Covid-19. To date, Arizona has over 7,200 confirmed cases of the virus and over 300 deaths.

ADHS To Receive \$12 Million In Funding

The Arizona Department of Health Services announced that Arizona will receive \$12.4 million from the CDC to support Arizona's public health response to the pandemic. This new funding is in addition to the \$16.2 million already received from the CDC related to Covid-19. ADHS described key funding priorities including: identifying cases, contact tracing and follow up activities, improving morbidity and mortality, surveillance, enhancing laboratory testing, and protecting and monitoring the health of our healthcare system.

For more information about the COVID-19 response in Arizona, click [here](#).



Governor Ducey Provides COVID-19 Update



Arizona Update on Issues



Click here to find COVID-19 resources and volunteer opportunities

Click here to find how you can donate a Mobile Hot Spot

Opinion Piece Written By Mark Fitzgerald



Finding Optimism During COVID-19

Mark Fitzgerald who serves as a Legislative Assistant at AGA recently wrote an Op-Ed about COVID-19. It parallels the Greatest Generations struggles as they adapted after WWII and how to find optimism during this uncertain period of time in history. Click below to read his Op-Ed.

Lessons From The Greatest Generation

Upcoming Legislators' Birthdays



Happy Birthday Rep. Leo Biasiucci (R) Thursday, April 29th

Representing LD5, Representative Biasiucci is serving his first term in the Legislature. A Lake Havasu City native, he is the owner of the Mohave Traffic Survival School and is a graduate of the University of Arizona. Biasiucci serves as Vice Chairman of the House Transportation committee and is a member of the Commerce, Education and Technology committees. This session, one of his top legislative priorities is HB2442 which repeals the highway safety fee imposed last year. To wish Representative Biasiucci happy birthday: lbiasiucci@azleg.gov



Happy Birthday Sen. Eddie Farnsworth (R) Monday, May 4th

Representing LD12, Senator Farnsworth is serving his final term at the Legislature before retiring. He was first elected to the House in 2000 and served for eight years, including a stint as majority leader from 2003 to 2004. Farnsworth holds both an M.B.A. and J.D. from George Washington University. At the Legislature, he serves as Chairman of the Senate Judiciary committee and is a member of the Rules and Transportation committees. This session his top legislative priority is SB1449. The bill establishes a list of circumstances under which a product liability action may be commenced or maintained against a seller that is not also a manufacturer of the product at issue. To wish Senator Farnsworth happy birthday: efarnsworth@azleg.gov

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