

Summary of Briefing with Governor Brian Kemp
March 17, 2020

- The goal of this call is to bring people up to speed and to ask county officials to help with messaging.
- He declared a Public Health State of Emergency on Saturday. The Georgia General Assembly ratified it yesterday. He declared a State of Emergency leading up to that which made available 2,000 National Guard troops to assist with the response.
- We are monitoring medical supplies and hospital beds around the state.
- Testing is not where we need to be, but we are continuing to ramp up. Many private companies are coming on board. We are in the process of setting up one testing site in each of our 18 public health regions. This is a FEMA/GEMA partnership. FEMA is paying to stand up these sites and the state public health people will be manning them.
- The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is now testing 200 specimens a day. This is double from last week's capacity. Public-private partnerships are going to help expand testing.
- We are asking people to continue social distancing, avoid large events, don't shake hands, don't elbow bump, keep your hands washed and use hand sanitizer, and help protect our elderly and chronically ill.
- Yesterday, he issued an order to close all public schools through March 31. This starts tomorrow.
- COVID hotline for the public: 844-442-2681
- The state currently has one isolation facility at Hard Labor Creek State Park in Morgan County that includes 7 trailers. One patient who isolated there has recovered and gone home. Another patient was moved there last night or this morning and that patient is doing well. The State is also building a new isolation site that will hold 20 trailers at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth County. That site should be up and running by the end of the week.
- Georgia numbers according to the Georgia Department of Public Health: 121 cases on Monday; 146 on Tuesday; 23 counties affected on Monday; 27 on Tuesday.
- GEMA and State Patrol delivering personal protective equipment (PPE) to strategic regions around the state where supplies are low. GEMA Director Homer Bryson has placed a private sector order masks, face shields, gowns and goggles.
- The National Guard has helped with the Princess Cruise passengers that have been housed at Dobbins Air Force Base. There were 487 people there over the weekend. Thirty-one of them were Georgians who are now all in home confinement and being monitored by their local public health department. Another 124 passengers are scheduled to leave today. Thanks to the Georgia National Guard, GEMA and the Cobb Chamber for delivering care packages for personal needs and other items.
- Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Airport Manager John Zellman is on the Governor's COVID-19 Taskforce. The airport is not busy. There is an approximate 40% drop in passengers. One TSA agent has tested positive and is quarantined. They have also notified and encouraged quarantine for other potential contacts. The Atlanta airport has been a great example of how to manage, board and unload planes.
- Attorney General Chris Carr is monitoring price gouging. There have been 29 cases so far, mostly related to food, water and grocery supplies. If you see or hear of price gouging, report them to the

Attorney General's office. There are some reports that private sites are charging up to \$300 for a COVID-19 test. People should contact their doctor or local DPH for advice on testing.

- The messaging is changing as we speak on who needs a test. The priority right now is for first responders, health care workers, the elderly and the medical fragile. Other people should call their doctor and let them decide if you need a test. Do not show up at emergency rooms or waiting rooms at health care providers. Call ahead and limit the exposure risks for others.
- The technical schools and higher education system are all going online through the end of the semester except for clinicals. He is working with Superintendent Richard Woods and the Department of Education on several matters regarding school closure. They have suspended Milestone testing and attendance requirements. This is a highly unusual move, but these are unusual circumstances and we must be flexible.
- Many governments are teleworking unless essential services need to be provided. If the state can offer advice on how to transition to this work environment, they will be glad to do so.
- The State of Georgia submitted a letter today to the Small Business Association for the loan programs out of amended federal Emergency Appropriations Act. Georgia may be first state in the southeast to get that letter submitted.
- Georgia State Senator Ben Watson from Savannah is a primary care physician that has reported that qualified federal health care centers are establishing drive-thru testing at their sites, such as LabCorp. There are innovative things happening for testing around the state.
- Grady Health System is continuing to manage the hospital and will begin testing tomorrow. They can do up to 40 tests a day.
- How county officials can help:
 - Help eliminate rumors. The State of Georgia is not shutting its borders.
 - The Governor's office will communicate what we are doing with stakeholders as much as we can before we do it.
 - There is no blanket order giving direction on restaurants and curfews. These decisions are being left to the local community. This is a local control issue. You know your businesses and your community. Find real world solutions. He has concerns about shutting things down completely. We need to be thoughtful but also keep all options on the table right now.
 - If you have questions about the open meetings law, contact your county attorney. The Governor's office cannot give legal advice.
 - Remind people to support your local businesses as much as they can during these trying times. This situation is going to be tough on our economy.
 - Continue to spread the message about social distancing and ways to flatten the curve through public service announcements or any way that you. The government nor the scientists are going to stop this virus. It is going to be the community. The community must use good judgement – social distancing, hand washing, protect our elderly and healthcare network.