

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 23, 2020

COVID-19
Vernon Parish Mitigation Strategy
Revised Press Release #3

At 9 a.m. today state and local officials met to discuss the COVID -19 virus in Vernon Parish. Present at the meeting were Senator Michael Reese, Representative Charles Owen, Representative Rodney Schamerhorn, Vernon Parish Police Jury President James B. Tuck, Vernon Parish Sheriff Sam Craft, Vernon Parish District Attorney Asa Skinner, Vernon Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Director Kenneth Moore, Leesville Mayor Rick Allen, Parish Administrator/Treasurer Rhonda M. Plummer, Parish Secretary Belinda S. Diehl, and Mr. Kevin Quinn and Dr. David Aymond from Byrd Regional Hospital.

Participants were briefed by representatives of Byrd Regional Hospital. The hospital is prepared to deal with this virus - they are fully staffed and have the necessary equipment to test, treat, and assist any residents that may require care. Anyone that is experiencing the symptoms of the virus – fever (100.4 and above), cough, or trouble breathing and is concerned should call their primary care provider for further instruction. However, in the event of an emergency you should seek immediate medical care.

Our Office of Emergency Preparedness Director, Mr. Kenneth Moore is in daily contact with Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and the Louisiana Department of Health to determine if any additional steps need to be taken in our parish to meet the needs of our citizens.

At this time, the Sheriff has not issued a curfew for Vernon Parish.

Yesterday, the Governor held a press conference outlining the additional measures for the Stay at Home Order he has issued. Most of these provisions have already been in place and are already being followed. The new measures include reducing the number of people in a gathering to 10 or less and closing some additional non-essential businesses.

Restaurants (drive-thru and carry out), grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores, and other retailers deemed essential in this order are not affected by this order and will remain in service. The Governor is also asking all non-essential employees (<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>) to remain home if possible. This order will remain in place until April 13th.

We would like to remind everyone to remain calm and continue to practice the health measures that have been in place, remain six (6) feet apart, wash hands frequently, and stay at home and out of the public as much as possible, especially if you are sick.

For the health and safety of our citizens we are requesting that everyone comply with the Governor's **Stay at Home Order** that takes effect March 23, 2020 at 5 p.m.

YOU CAN

- Go to the grocery, convenience or warehouse store
- Go to the pharmacy to pick up medications and other healthcare necessities
- Go to medical appointments (check with your doctor or provider first)
- Go to a restaurant for take-out, delivery or drive-thru
- Care for or support a friend or family member
- Take a walk, ride your bike, hike, jog and be in nature for exercise - just keep at least six feet between you and others
- Walk your pets and take them to the veterinarian if necessary
- Help someone to get necessary supplies
- Receive deliveries from any business which delivers

YOU SHOULD NOT

- Go to work unless you are providing essential services as defined by this Order
- Visit friends and family if there is no urgent need
- Maintain less than 6 feet of distance from others when you go out
- Visit loved ones in the hospital, nursing home, skilled nursing facility or other residential care facility, except for limited exceptions as provided on the facility websites

What is the difference between “Stay at Home” and “social distancing”?

- Stay at home is a stricter form of social distancing
- Stay at home means:
 - Stay home (stay unexposed and do not expose others)
 - Only go out for essential services
 - Stay six feet or more away from others
 - Don't gather in groups

The full text of the Governor's Order can be found online at

<https://gov.louisiana.gov/page/coronavirus>

For questions or concerns, please contact:

Vernon Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness: 337-238-0815

Vernon Parish Sheriff's Office: 337-238-1311

Vernon Parish Police Jury: 337-238-0324

COVID-19 Resources:

- Louisiana Department of Public Health: <http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>
- COVID-19 questions are being answered by the **Louisiana 211 Network – dial 211 or text 898-211**
- Centers for Disease Control: <https://coronavirus.gov>

- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

END