

## Daily Coronavirus Response Update Call

### **National Update-Ben Moser**

Ben began by stating that this is Day 7 of the National Emergency. China reported its first day with no new infections, three months after the first case was detected. However, other nations of the world are bracing for a surge of infections. It was also reported that two members of the United States Congress have tested positive for the virus and are in isolation. While older people remain at greatest risk worldwide the Centers for Disease Control reports that 38% of people that required hospitalization in the United States are ages 20-54. Dr. Deborah Burkes, the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator warns that as testing becomes widespread the numbers will soar. President Donald Trump signed a relief package providing sick leave, unemployment benefits and free coronavirus testing. Also, lawmakers are drafting a one trillion-dollar economic stabilization package. Even though the federal government has invoked wartime powers to speed production, central medical equipment such as surgical mask, protective body suits, testing kits and ventilators remain in short supply. Leaders in Germany are stressing social distancing. In California more than nine million people have been told not to leave their homes. The Governor of New York has compelled employees to work from home. The World Health Organization Director General stated that social distancing can help reduce the spread of the virus, reduce the burden on the health care system and can make epidemics manageable. To suppress and control epidemics countries must test, treat and trace.

### **Feeding the Valley Update-Frank Sheppard**

Frank began by stating that he, Ben and Jennifer have had good conversation about getting food into the community during this crisis. The Mobile Pantry will be at Cascade Hills Church this Saturday from 9am until 2pm or while supplies last. They are expecting 1500-2000 families to show up. The boxes will be distributed using a non-contact format. People will drive in and volunteers will put commodities in their trunks. The next Saturday (March 28) the Mobile Pantry will be at the Phenix City Central Activity Center for Russell County residents. They are expecting 1000 families to show up. They are trying to get food to families before Spring break. Frank added that Feeding the Valley is discussing with United Way other ways to get food to children in the community. More updates to come on where and when food will be available.

Lindsey Reis of Hope Harbour asked what type of verification is needed to pick up the food.

Frank answered that they are waiving income eligibility. However, they will be asked if they are a Georgia resident.

### **Alabama Update-State House Representative Chris Blackshear**

Representative Blackshear began by stating that there are 51 confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in the state of Alabama as of 5:10pm EST yesterday. Twenty-Five of those cases are in Jefferson County. There are eight confirmed cases in Lee County and three of those are college students. The number will continue to rise as more testing

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becomes available. There is a hotline available and the number is 888-264-2256. The hotline has information about testing site locations. Also, there is one confirmed case at the Hyundai plant, and they have made the decision to close the plant. The March 31 runoff election has been postponed until July 14, 2020

### **Troy University Update-Dr. David White**

Dr. White began by stating that the university began online only classes this week. Eighty percent of staff are working from home. They have shortened office hours for staff that are still working to 10am-4pm, Monday thru Thursday and 10am-1pm on Friday.

### **Phenix City Housing Authority Update-Mary Mayrose**

Mary began by stating that the Phenix City Housing authority offices and community centers are closed. Only essential staff are working, and they are working from home. Drop boxes are open if residents need to drop off materials or rent. The mail is being checked daily and drop boxes twice a week. They are having a virtual staff meeting this afternoon.

### **METRA Transportation Update-Rosa Evans**

Rosa began by stating that there have been no changes to METRA services. They are educating staff and travelers per the Centers of Disease Control guidelines. They are advising people not to get out to travel unless they must and to practice social distancing. They are doing extra cleaning of the buses and facilities daily. The routes continue to run normal hours on their regular schedules.

### **Columbus Consolidated Government Update-Lisa Goodwin**

Lisa began by stating that all facilities such as the civic center, ice rink, parks and recreation, aquatic center, skate park, etc., are closed, and events cancelled or postponed. The government center is still open and those who can are working from home. They are following the Centers of Disease Control guidelines. They have the minimal number of people in departments and as customers come in, they are practicing social distancing by having a minimal number of people in line.

### **Home for Good Update-Pat Frey**

Pat began by stating that the United Way staff have been reporting back and forth as needs arrive. They are compiling a list of changes to protocol in order to get messages out to providers. Today the staff will be posting messages concerning the virus, the symptoms and the hotline number. Outreach teams will continue daily posting of information for the unsheltered in populated areas. Home for Good is monitoring 211 calls for housing request. No uptick yet.

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Pat gave kudos to Neil Richardson and Josh Hinton. Valley Rescue Mission closed their men's shelter yesterday and Neil opened Safehouse as a temporary men's shelter until Josh Hinton of Salvation Army can take over.

### **Salvation Army Update-Josh Hinton**

Josh began by stating that they have beds in their facility from last summer when they were a men's shelter before converting to the family shelter. They are working to get things up and running to accommodate 22 men. His staff is in the process of cleaning and getting supplies. This is for emergency shelter due to the closing of Valley Rescue Mission and will be ran on a week by week basis. His staff is compiling a list of supplies needed and he will email that list to Pat Frey.

Alex Balkum of Red Cross stated that he and Josh have talked about the fact that there is not a shelter per se for Covid-19. Once someone is identified as having the virus, they will need to be isolated. His concern is that if people are going in and out of the shelter they will need to be monitored as the shelter could become a breeding ground for the virus. Ben thanked Alex for his recommendation.

Neil Richardson of Safehouse agreed with Alex and stated that the Safehouse is prepared to set up an isolation area. They have an area with a separate HVAC system. He continued by stating that he is prepared to house the men temporarily until Josh is up and running at Salvation Army. He will then shutdown the emergency men's shelter and then be prepared to house in isolation those who do test positive for the virus. Alex thanked Neil for being proactive.

### **Crisis Fund Update-Betsy Covington**

Betsy began by stating that for those that may be new to the call, the Community Foundation and United Way of the Chattahoochee have rolled out the Coronavirus Response Fund to give people, businesses and other foundations in our community a way to positively respond to the crisis. Money is starting to come into the fund. To learn more about the guidelines and how to give go to [CFCV.com/coronavirus](http://CFCV.com/coronavirus). There is some new information on the website for nonprofits seeking extra support from the fund. This work is ongoing and changing rapidly as we connect with other funders around the country who are doing similar funds. We are all learning from each other. She added that we will do this and do it well and that she appreciates everyone's support. Please email Betsy or Ben with any questions.

### **Open Forum Updates**

Dr. David Lewis of the Muscogee County School District stated that the feedings are going well, and the volunteers have been great. If anyone is interested in volunteering, they can contact the school nutritionist at 706-748-2000. Also, they have added two new feeding sites, one at Jordan High School and one at Midland Academy. The school district is also in the process of preparing 20 days of instructional material for after Spring Break if it is needed. They are also prepared to continue the feedings after

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Spring break if needed. He reminded everyone that these meals are for any student in our community ages 0-18 years of age. The only exceptions are the students must pick them up and they cannot be consumed on site.

Alex of Red Cross asked Pat about consolidation of information for distribution. I.e. Feeding program and volunteers, emergency men's shelter and volunteers etc. Pat answered that they are working on messaging for the website and social media and should be getting something out this afternoon.

Lisa Smith of Georgia Power Company stated that they are continuing to serve customers and that there should be no interruption in services. They do have staff are able to do teleworking. Effective March 14, 2020 they have suspended residential disconnecting for the next 30 days. Lisa also reminded everyone of the 65 and older discount. They can call Georgia Power for details. She warned that customers may receive fraudulent calls during this crisis and that Georgia Power would never call and demand payment.

Adelaide Kirk of American Red Cross stated that all regional offices are closed. Everyone is working remotely and still providing services. They are still responding to house fires. They are just using different practices and practicing social distancing. She stated that they are experiencing a critical blood shortage across the nation. The local Red Cross will be hosting a blood drive on next week (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 1pm-7pm) at Cascade Hills Church. They will be practicing extra safety measures.

Juan of the Chattahoochee Council of Boy Scouts America asked if Adelaide could forward information to him to help promote the blood drive. He also advised that he had space in his facility if she needed another location to hold a drive. Sharon Borger of Easterseals also offered space in her facility if needed.

Lindsey Reis of Hope Harbour wanted to remind everyone that they are up and running and the crisis line is open 24 hours. With children out of school and people working from home they are expecting a high rise in domestic violence. They have beds in the shelter and hotels if needed.

Betsy concluded the call by saying thank you. She is glad to hear that everyone is planning and working together. She is grateful and proud to be partnering with this community.

Call adjourned at 10:44am