

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR DE BLASIO TO CREATE HOSPITAL AT BILLIE JEAN KING TENNIS
CENTER TO RELIEVE NEED AT ELMHURST HOSPITAL**

New hospital will hold up to 350 patients and begin seeing people next week

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced a new temporary hospital facility at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center in Flushing Meadow, Queens. The facility will treat COVID non-ICU patients beginning next Tuesday, April 7th. The hospital will reach its full capacity of 350 patients over the next three weeks. These additional beds will help relieve some of the current need at Elmhurst Hospital.

“We’re approaching the toughest weeks of this crisis, and our City is rising to the challenge,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We are increasing hospital capacity at breakneck speed to ensure that every person in need of care will get it – no questions asked.”

Citywide as of 6:00 PM on March 31st, there are 41,771 positive cases of COVID-19 and 1,096 fatalities. There are 7,814 confirmed cases in the Bronx, 11,160 in Brooklyn, 6,539 in Manhattan, 13,869 Queens, and 2,354 in Staten Island.

As of 6:00 PM on March 31th, there were at least 8,400 people hospitalized. Of those individuals, at least 1,888 were in the ICU.

Hospital Capacity Update

NYC Health + Hospitals has now added 1,000 contract nurses to support existing staff system wide. To support the continued surge of patients, Health + Hospitals will also add an additional 1,000 nurses in the coming weeks. The City has also asked the federal government to supply 1,000 nurses, 3,000 respiratory therapists, and 150 doctors to support hospital staff across the City.

Critical Supply Update

Today, the City distributed 800,000 N95 masks, 3,000,000 face masks, 120,000 face shields, 40,000 gowns, and 600,000 surgical gloves to hospitals citywide.

The City has put out a call to oral surgeons, plastic surgeons, and veterinarians across the City to donate ventilators that are currently not in use. More information on how to donate is available [here](#).

The City has now received and is working to dispatch all 2,500 ventilators received by the federal government. To date, the City has distributed a total of 3,056,000 face masks, 3,287,880 N95 masks, 65,470 gowns, and 1,305,940 surgical gloves to hospitals across the City.

City Jail Update

Through a combination of efforts by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the District Attorneys and the State, as of today, the City has released at least 900 people from our jails.

Playgrounds

Parks Department Staff has noticed a consistent lack of social distancing with children's play equipment at 10 playgrounds across the City and will close them by the end of today, Tuesday, March 31st. The playgrounds include:

Brooklyn:

- Middleton Playground
- Fort Greene Park – 2 playgrounds
- Brighton Playground

Bronx

- Watson Gleason Playground

Manhattan:

- Fort Tryon - Jacob Javits Playground
- Raoul Wallenberg Playground (in Highbridge Park)

Queens

- Mauro Playground (in Meadows Corona Park)

Staten Island:

- Clove Lakes Park - 2 playgrounds

The City will continue to closely enforce social distancing rules and close additional playgrounds as necessary.

Protecting Amazon Workers

The Mayor has directed the Commission on Human Rights to investigate Amazon for the alleged firing of a Staten Island Fulfillment Center worker who organized a strike over the company's health and safety practices.

Alternate Side Parking

Alternate Side Parking (ASP) citywide will be suspended for an additional two weeks through Tuesday, April 14th. Any New Yorker under isolation who has received a ticket can appeal to the Department of Finance and should provide medical documentation or testimony, which will be taken into consideration when their case is reviewed. For additional questions call 311.

Enforcing Closure of Non-Essential Construction Work

Following new State restrictions temporarily halting all non-essential construction, the Department of Buildings formulated specific guidance and agency operating protocols to implement these new emergency orders. Moving forward, only emergency construction work, essential facilities construction work, and work that is performed by a sole worker on a job site is permitted in New York City until further notice.

Emergency Construction Work includes the following:

- Projects necessary to protect the health and safety of a building's occupants
- Any emergency work ordered by the Department
- Restoration work for essential services such as heat, hot water, or electricity
- Work necessary to repair a condition that severely affects life, health, safety or property
- Any work where it would cause an unsafe condition to halt the project before it is finished
- Essential Facilities Construction includes:
 - Roads, bridges and transit facilities
 - Utility work
 - Hospitals or Health Care Facilities
 - Transitional or Homeless Shelters
 - Affordable Housing
 - Other essential facilities as directed by the Department

All other work regulated by DOB, and not covered by the above, is required to suspend operations until further notice. In addition, DOB will be rescinding all previously issued After Hours Variance (AHV) permits. Going forward AHV permits, required to perform any work at night or on the weekend, will only be issued for approved essential or emergency work. Non-essential construction sites must submit a request to continue work and be approved by DOB. Requests can be submitted at www.nyc.gov/dobnow.

Department of Buildings inspectors will be regularly inspecting construction sites citywide to ensure that they are complying with the emergency order; that non-essential construction operations have been suspended where required, and proper safety measures have been implemented. All sites, essential or non-essential must maintain appropriate social distancing measures, including for elevators, meals and entry and exit. Violations of social distancing or non-essential construction work will lead to enforcement actions from the Department, and subject to fines of up to \$10,000 starting on Tuesday, March 31.

Any construction site that has been halted due to this emergency order must be properly secured and maintained at all times in order to safeguard the public throughout the duration of time while operations at the site are suspended. The owner of the site is legally responsible to ensure the sites are kept safe. See below some of the requirements for suspended construction sites in the city:

- Weekly safety inspections of the site by the owner, or an individual designated by the owner
- Accurate logs of each of these required safety inspections must be kept at the site at all times

- All public sidewalk and walkways adjacent to the sites must be maintained in a safe condition
- All garbage, debris, and standing water must be removed from the site

Helping NYC's Small Businesses

The Department of Small Business Services started the NYC Employee Retention Grant program as an immediate response to the economic setbacks small businesses were facing because of the coronavirus outbreak. The City moved swiftly to provide service to businesses that have up to 4 employees with this grant and has been successful in serving over 1,200 businesses with the allotted \$10 million for the grant program, an average of \$7,800 for each grant. This grant program will officially close to applicants on Friday at 5pm, and the City will continue to serve small businesses through the Small Business Continuity Fund, which is also first come first serve. This loan gives up to \$75,000 to businesses with up to 99 employees. Businesses can use this loan to supplement their payroll costs, for working capital, inventory, and other investments. Eligible owners who would like to learn more about the loan program should call 311 or visit nyc.gov/covid19biz. The City is also working to connect small businesses to the programs and loans offered by the United States Small Business Administration. SBS will be offering technical assistance to ensure that NYC small businesses are best prepared to fully access business assistance programs funded by the federal stimulus.

Postponing Annual Tax Lien Sale Until August

The City will postpone its annual tax lien sale until August, as residents continue to cope with the COVID-19 outbreak.

Property owners who are facing hardships making their property tax payments can take advantage of several existing Department Of Finance programs. These include exemption programs to lower the amount of taxes owed, standard payment plans, or a new Property Tax and Interest Deferral (PT AID) program, for those who qualify. More information on those programs can be found on the agency's website.

Stay Informed

Nearly 800,000 New Yorkers have signed up for the City's COVID text notification system to get regular updates on the latest developments with coronavirus in New York City text COVID to 692-692. New Yorkers can text COVIDESP to 692-692 for updates in Spanish. You will receive regular SMS texts with the latest news and developments. If you have any questions on finding medical care call 311.

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