

PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT BY MAYOR ROBERT M. RESTAINO

Good afternoon

At the close of this week I would like to review and update the response of our city to the current health crisis

Please remember we are remaining consistent with the public health officials directives received in my daily federal, state and local conference calls which include

Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

Cover your cough or sneeze

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands

Stay home if you are ill

These directives are designed to reduce the spread of the virus and are critical to the public health and safety of our community. Please remember these are not suggestions, these are public health directives and I am stressing the point as we all have a personal responsibility for our own health but given the nature of this virus we also have a social responsibility to our families and our community.

In keeping with our interest to limit density, all city buildings, playgrounds, athletic fields and facilities, skate parks etc. are closed to the public until further notice. This includes school district playgrounds and athletic fields and facilities. This also includes all Little League fields and no activity is permitted at these locations until further notice.

These public restrictions are, as I have said, vitally important to reducing the spread of the virus and I am expecting that we will all be mindful of these closures and the risk ignoring it could present to you and your family.

Today we are officially cancelling the annual city Easter egg hunt scheduled for April 4 due to the current health crisis. Previously I had intended to present a State of the City address at the end of this month and I am postponing that address as a result of this health crisis as our attention and energy must be focused on that issue.

Currently as of this report to you, the city has 4 cases which have tested positive for the virus, however the city has several case in self-quarantine and/or awaiting testing.

As of this past Sunday, March 22 NYS enacted Matilda's Law which is an effort to provide additional health directives to populations more vulnerable to the virus, particularly, individuals 70 or older and those with compromised immune systems or other chronic conditions, these additional directives include

Remain indoors to the greatest extent possible, outdoor solitary exercise is fine

Wear a mask if you are in the company of others

For those with computer access, I would like to provide you with some website locations to find additional helpful information:

For those currently unemployed due this health crisis: **labor.ny.gov**

For business owners: **sba.gov**

Our city website: **niagarafallsusa.org**

Our school district website: **nfschools.net**

Our county website: **niagaracounty.com**

Our hospital website: **nfmhc.org**

In the coming weeks the City will engage a full time public information officer in the Office of the Chief Executive. This position will allow the city the opportunity to provide information to residents, visitors and business regarding this health crisis across the various media platforms available, along with events and other information of public interest once we are past these current circumstances. In this way this administration can achieve the goal of greater community communication along engaging our business and tourism entities.

Finally, I realize that during times like this when the constant tone is set by this health crisis, it can be draining and overwhelming. I want you to know that we are in this together and we will come through this together and stronger for this experience. All throughout our community there are tremendous examples of how this city has come together in time of need

From skilled individuals sewing health masks and more; to restaurants delivering food to first responders; to medical volunteers signing up to help at our hospital; our school district feeding thousands and neighborhoods finding ways to stay connected with each other safely. These are just a few of the many examples in our community.

If you haven't already visited the city website I invite you to go the News and Announcement section and click on the title

Niagara Falls will be here...waiting for you!!

I'm sure you will find it enjoyable.

We all know that these changes in our community during this health crisis have made for a very unusual time, it has given us all a chance to slow down a bit and maybe that is a good thing. While I would like to tell you that this will only last a few more days or weeks I can't tell you that, but what I can tell you is by following the simple guidelines reviewed here for personal health safety, complying with the closures to limit public density outlined here, supporting our local businesses and remaining in contact with family and friends to provide support to one another our city will emerge from this better and greater than ever. Thank you all for continued support and please stay safe and stay healthy