

March 25, 2020

Dear Grower,

You will know me as the Worker Protection Standard specialist from Penn State University. Usually I am meeting with you regarding the WPS regulation but today's letter is about a more urgent need—you and your family's safety from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) For those of you who do not have Internet access we wanted to share some basic information with you.

The number of COVID-19 cases are constantly climbing. On March 24, 2020, there had been 358,274 cases of COVID-19 and 15,431 deaths worldwide. Here in the United States there was close to 40,000 cases so far with 475 deaths. Please take this virus seriously. Your family's life may depend on it.

Some think that this virus is a political ploy but that is a misconception and people of all political parties are dying.

Some think that it is only a threat to our elderly population; however, it can hurt the young too. Approximately 15%-20% of hospital admissions are for young adults age 20-40 years old.

Holmes Morton, MD, founder of the Clinic for Special Children in Strasburg in Strasburg, PA and founder and medical director of the Central PA Clinic in Belleville, PA, is worried about the COVID-19 infections and crowd. "A gathering of hundreds of people at a fund-raising dinner or benefit auction could easily become the source of an outbreak of COVID-19 in the [Amish and Mennonite] community," noted Morton.

According to Morton, **each person who is infected and attends an event will pass the infection to an additional three to five people.** The onset of symptoms for those who contract the illness at that event will be, on average, 4.5 days after the event. Those who become ill require hospitalization and intensive care, and those who survive will have long and expensive hospital stays. Death and long hospital stays will happen most often in children and adults with underlying chronic diseases and in the elderly. For those who do not survive the illness, the median time from the start of the disease to death will be 12.5 days.

If you think that you might have COVID-19, you can get tested through local clinics. Call your doctor or nurse for instructions BEFORE you go to their office and before you go to the hospital.

The Central PA Clinic in Belleville may soon be able to test for COVID-19 through CSI Labs in Huntingdon PA. For more information and to ask about the clinic's testing services, call the clinic at 717-935-2065.

You also can call the Pennsylvania COVID-19 hotline at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) if you are worried that you might have the disease or if you think you may need to be tested

(Over)

COVID-19 is a very serious disease. Do what you can to help stop the spread.

- Wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds.
- Minimize your time around other people and try to stay at least 6 feet from each other.
- Avoid auctions, weddings, fund raising banquets, shaking hands, and even church for the time being. Although enjoyable, those are the situations where the COVID-19 germs will easily spread.
- Wash your hands after handling cash. COVID-19 germs can last on paper several days

Please share this information with your family and friends but please share it from a distance of at least 6 feet.

Sincerely,

Jim Harvey
Worker Protection Standard specialist