

GOVERNOR LOU LEON GUERRERO
COVID-19 SPECIAL ADDRESS
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020

Good morning.

Last night, I announced that we received our first confirmed cases of COVID-19. Each of these three patients presented to GMH on Saturday and were isolated pending the outcome of their respective test results. Each patient remains in isolation, and Public Health has since initiated its close contact and tracing investigation.

Because I want to give Public Health officials and our CDC advisors the best chance at investigating and mitigating against the spread of COVID-19, I am ordering a 14-day suspension of all nonessential government services effective immediately. All critical health and public safety operations will continue uninterrupted.

This 14-day shutdown includes schools and all other government agencies. Directors will advise government employees if they are required to report for essential government operations.

While our Public Health officials are doing their job to detect and track any potential spread of COVID-19, I am asking that we, as a community, take actions to make that task easier. We can do this by taking steps to prevent further transmission.

By now, you have likely heard the term social distancing quite a bit. This practice includes maintaining a distance of between six and ten feet from the next person when you are out in public. Please practice social distancing. It is imperative to our community's health.

Additionally, on the recommendation of CDC and local public health officials, I am prohibiting large gatherings of one hundred people or more. This prohibition includes social, school, sports, and religious gatherings.

Detailed guidance on this prohibition will be provided in the next few hours.

I know that many of you have questions. Shortly, the Joint Information Center will be announcing the establishment of a hotline intended to address your concerns as best we can. Additionally, other guidance, as it becomes available, will be provided by the Joint Information Center.

I do not take this action lightly. I do it knowing that it will temporarily but significantly affect our way of life—but protecting you and your families is my first responsibility.

I know that many of you feel a sense of fear. But you are our most effective weapon against this virus. Equip yourself with information. Stay home if you are sick, avoid close contact with those who are ill.

If you need to go to the grocery store, the pharmacy or a medical facility—do that. But know that limiting your contact with those who might be ill is how you can help the doctors, nurses, and first responders who are keeping us safe.

As I have said in the past, this situation is developing in real-time, we share the information we have as quickly and accurately as we can. But sometimes that information may change as details are investigated and verified.

For example, after further vetting and investigation, we have determined that two of the individuals who have received positive COVID-19 results actually arrived on Guam on February 29 and not March 2, as previously reported.

We are in the midst of a global challenge. Many countries around the world, 49 States, and the District of Columbia all have confirmed COVID cases.

We are not alone. And I am taking these actions now to protect our community as a whole.

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