



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Berrien County extends the Local State of Emergency in response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic

(Berrien County, Michigan) -- On April 2, 2020, the Chair of the Berrien County Board of Commissioners, Mac Elliott, signed an order extending the Local State of Emergency in Berrien County until April 30, 2020. The Board of County Commissioners authorized the Chief Executive Officer to renew and extend the original Local State of Emergency that was originally signed on March 26, 2020. This order was extended for the coordinated response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic that is causing significant respiratory illness in Berrien County. To date, there are now 52 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the community, with one (1) of those cases having resulted in a fatality.

"The action allows the Berrien County Emergency Operation Center to continue to operate and support the efforts of the Berrien County Health Department and Spectrum Health Lakeland and to continue to provide vital resources already in place to deal with this pandemic," said Mac Elliott, chairman. The local State of Emergency is extended to provide the funding and resources at the county level. This does not change or effect any of the protective measures that are already in place that are set forth in Governor Whitmer's current Executive Orders.

Berrien County officials continue to stress the importance of heeding current Executive Orders in place throughout the state of Michigan, including the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order 2020-21. To help control the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon issued an [Emergency Order](#) on April 2 [setting a civil penalty of up to \\$1,000](#) and a process for referral to licensing agencies for violations of Executive Orders. Criminal penalties for violation will remain an option for prosecutors. Berrien County law enforcement agencies are authorized to investigate potential violations of Executive Orders to help control the epidemic and protect the public's health. Residents who have questions or concerns regarding the Executive Orders are encouraged to call the Berrien County COVID-19 Response Hotline at 1-800-815-5485.