

# COVID-19 News

Email: [Media@dupagehealth.org](mailto:Media@dupagehealth.org)  
Phone: (630) 221-7374

May 29, 2020

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Providing Guidance to Essential Businesses During COVID-19**

**DUPAGE COUNTY**— As the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) works to slow the spread of COVID-19, essential businesses—restaurants offering carryout and delivery, grocery stores, and companies that manufacture and process foods—are concerned with keeping their workers and products safe.

During normal operations, these businesses are familiar with DCHD’s Environmental Health Services (EHS) unit, which is responsible for permitting and regulating over 4,000 food service facilities operating in DuPage County. EHS Specialists (also known as sanitarians) work with local businesses to ensure the foods we eat, beverages we drink, and the buildings are safe and healthy.

“Slowing the spread of COVID-19 while keeping essential businesses operating is a major concern,” said Michael DeSmedt, Assistant Director of Environmental Health Services. “We quickly shifted our focus and developed the Business Resource Team (BRT) to provide owners and operators the guidance they required.”

BRT team members have provided over 250 consultations with DuPage County business leaders on the topics of:

- Protecting employees and clients from spreading disease during the pandemic;
- Ensuring proper cleaning and disinfection with EPA-approved products;
- Providing the current best practices on safe operations; and
- Specific information and resources a business may need to operate safely.

“Each business receives a toolkit with detailed information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Illinois Department of Public Health and DCHD that includes a potential exposure to COVID-19 fact sheet, an isolation and quarantine release chart, symptom monitoring log, social distancing posters and notification letter to employees,” said DeSmedt.

When it was learned COVID-19 had spread among the workforce of a large food processing plant, the Office of the Illinois Attorney General (OAG) contacted DCHD to confirm the number of cases and provide technical assistance. Typically, employees work shoulder-to-shoulder on production and packaging lines, a practice that is currently unacceptable. The company agreed to guidance that reduced its output, which allowed social distancing through staggered work shifts.

**-More-**

As the State of Illinois moves into Phase 3 of the Governor's Restore Illinois, plan, this team will continue to provide support to both owners and employees to provide an additional level of support and expertise. With over 90,000 business registered within DuPage County, the DCHD Business Resource Team recommends business owners and employees first to utilize the resources available on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/pages/restoreILP3.aspx>. This information is also available on the DuPage County Health Department's website, under Business Guidance through links back to that site. If there are questions after reviewing that information, individuals can submit those questions to the Health Department using: [COVID19Business@dupagehealth.org](mailto:COVID19Business@dupagehealth.org).

The DuPage County Health Department remains committed to address the significant impact and unfortunate loss of life related to COVID-19. Our efforts continue with healthcare and community partners to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in DuPage County.

Visit the DCHD COVID-19 Dashboard at [www.dupagehealth.org/covid19data](http://www.dupagehealth.org/covid19data) for detailed information, including hospitalizations, deaths and outbreak-associated counts by municipality. The Dashboard also includes COVID-19 data among DuPage County residents by race, ethnicity, severity, positivity, long-term care facility outcomes and underlying medical conditions.

###