



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church

FROM: Bruce W. Day and Tara A. LaClair

DATE: March 20, 2020

RE: Recommendations to Respond to Covid-19 / Coronavirus in an Ever-changing Environment

With so much information coming from so many different sources across the country this week (and likely every day for the foreseeable future), we thought it important to provide some guidance on how to best manage day to day operations during such uncertainty.

The President has published the Whitehouse's Coronavirus Guidelines for America - 15 Days to Slow the Spread and the CDC has provided guidance as well. In addition, every state and most cities across the country have adopted one or both of these guidances and provide additional information, resources and their own forms of guidance, including passing ordinances mandating certain behaviors. This situation is fluid and all churches should be reminded to check with local authorities and resources to ensure they are complying with their state and local requirements or mandates.

Our recommended strategies include:

- **Be Informed:** Keep advised of developments and changes in your communities. Current policies and ordinances vary significantly from those banning all public and private gatherings beyond a single household (such as in San Francisco and Orange County, CA) to those with recommendations to curtail gatherings of more than 250 people. The federal government's most recent recommendation is to limit any gathering to no more than 10 people.
- **Keep Others Informed:** Keep your congregation and employees advised of emergency operation plans, the status of events and services and where they can seek help or obtain supplies. Provide phone numbers for persons who need someone to talk to and call at risk persons to check in on them.

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

OKLAHOMA CITY • Braniff Building • 324 N. Robinson Ave., Ste. 100 • Oklahoma City, OK 73102 • T: 405.235.7700 • F: 405.239.6651

TULSA • 500 Kennedy Building • 321 S. Boston Ave. • Tulsa, OK 74103 • T: 918.592.9800 • F: 918.592.9801

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- **Hold Internet Based (video/online) Services** rather than normal services in church facilities. While most (though not all) current restrictions on gatherings do not mandate you to cease all in person services, continuing to hold events with more than 10 persons creates risk of spreading the virus and increases potential liability for your organizations in the event an attendee is sick and spreads the virus or becomes sick after attending an event or gathering. Currently available information indicates that persons may be contagious without showing any symptoms.
- **Postpone Other In Person Events:** If you have other gatherings scheduled that are likely to draw more than 10 persons, such events should be postponed or continued at this time unless they could be conducted online or by telephone. Again, ordinances and restrictions vary significantly by location, so consult your local authorities if you are uncertain. In some communities, all gatherings may be banned.
- **Actively Encourage Sick Employees** or volunteers to stay at home. If people show symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19, they should be sent home.
- **Identify Spaces** where sick persons (employees, volunteers or congregation members) can be separated, if need be. Do separate sick person(s) to avoid spreading the virus.
- **Emphasize Good Hygiene Habits**, including hand washing (at least 20 seconds with soap and water), use of hand sanitizer if washing is not possible, avoid touching your face, avoid shaking hands, do maintain social distancing of at least 3 feet and do cough /sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
- **Perform Additional Sanitizing** and cleaning of all employee spaces, public spaces and frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, touch screens, pens etc.
- **Update Your Emergency Operations** plans with assistance from local public health departments, emergency centers and key personnel. Be sure to include a plan for distributing information in a timely manner to employees, volunteers and congregation members.
- **Plan for Staff Absences** by developing flexible schedules and leave policies. Plan for alternative coverage for necessary positions.
- **Community Service:** If you are providing necessities for those in your community (such as food, water, hand soap, medications, etc.), consider whether these can be delivered to or picked up by persons in need with minimal contact, such as implementing a drive-up type service or having congregation members

(low risk persons with no exposure or symptoms only) deliver packages to the high risk members of the community. This will minimize exposure of high risk persons.

- **Have Supplies on Site** for employees and others who need to be in your churches, such as hand sanitizer, hand soap, tissues, paper towel, disposable masks, gloves and trash cans.

We want to reassure people and provide counseling during this difficult period, but we also need to protect people by minimizing exposure. In the spirit of it is better to be safe than sorry, we encourage everyone to review and adopt the CDC Guidelines for social distancing and the President's Guidance for America. If you need assistance or additional information, including how to set up online services, please contact us.