



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Berrien County, Michigan) – Although many people have questions regarding the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order signed by Governor Whitmer, Berrien County residents are requested to not call the Berrien County Public Safety Dispatch Center with their questions or concerns regarding possible violations. The Berrien County Sheriff’s Office is working closely with the Health Department to attempt to handle these calls through the Berrien County COVID-19 Response Hotline (800) 815-5485. “We need to keep our dispatchers available to answer 9-1-1 calls and other calls for service where a police, fire or EMS response is needed,” said 9-1-1 Director Dave Agens.

Sheriff Paul Bailey is asking residents to [review the Executive Order](#) before making a formal complaint, since many exceptions apply. The Berrien County Sheriff’s Department has established an [online tip form](#) to handle the non-emergency reports of violations of the Executive Order issued by the Governor. This tip form can be found at www.bcsheriff.org/ExecutiveOrderTip.

In order to slow the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that hospital resources are preserved for those at highest risk of critical illness, it is important that everyone follow the social distancing guidelines. The Executive Order that was issued by the Governor was put in place to assist in making this happen.

“It is going to take all of us working together and complying with this order to help slow the spread of this virus,” said Chief Paul Toliver from the Berrien Springs-Oronoko Twp Police Department. “Law enforcement officials across the county are urging people to comply with this order voluntarily. Our goal would be to educate people and warn individuals first and then take enforcement action if the violation continues and it poses a public health concern.” Willful violations of the Governor’s Executive Orders are a misdemeanor and can also result in a \$500 fine.

Spectrum Health Lakeland continues to prepare for heightened COVID-19 activity in Berrien County. Anyone who is experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 (fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should call the free COVID-19 screening hotline at 616.391.2380 and remain home for seven days after illness onset, or 72 hours after resolution of fever and improvement of respiratory symptoms, whichever is longer. Please be aware that a free virtual screening is not a COVID-19 test and is required before specimen collection may occur.

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