March 21, 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may now know, Governor Murphy has just issued a new "Stay-At-Home" Executive Order this afternoon which takes effect at 9:00pm this evening. It is important to realize that the Governor’s action is intended to protect us all and reduce the risks associated with the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The Governor’s order still provides for certain exceptions such as obtaining essential goods and services, seeking medical attention, visiting family and close friends, reporting to work or engaging in outdoor activity.

**The order also prohibits all gatherings of individuals, such as parties, celebrations, or other social events. When in public, individuals must practice social distancing and stay at least six feet apart whenever possible, excluding immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners.**

Governor Murphy's executive order further directs the closure of all non-essential retail businesses to the public, **with the exceptions of:**

- Grocery stores, farmer's markets and farms that sell directly to customers, and other food stores, including retailers that offer a varied assortment of foods comparable to what exists at a grocery store;
- Pharmacies and medical marijuana dispensaries;
- Medical supply stores;
- Gas stations;
- Convenience stores;
- Ancillary stores within healthcare facilities;
- Hardware and home improvement stores;
- Banks and other financial institutions;
- Laundromats and dry-cleaning services;
- Stores that principally sell supplies for children under five years;
- Pet stores;
- Liquor stores;
- Car dealerships, but only for auto maintenance and repair, and auto mechanics;
- Printing and office supply shops;
- Mail and delivery stores.

Please understand that this is not a permanent situation, but a moment in time when all of us need to be vigilant, cooperate, and comply with the precautions that are being taken. Please follow the Governor’s order, which I strongly support, and let us all continue to promote the behaviors calculated to reduce the risk of catching or spreading the Covid-19 virus. Everyone please continue to stay safe, remain calm and patient, and please, let's all stay positive during these challenging times. Thank you.

Very sincerely yours,

Jim Baldassare
Bernards Township
Mayor