

E-mail to Michigan Trial Courts
Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Colleagues,

Last night, Governor Whitmer announced that two Michigan residents have tested presumptive positive for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the first confirmed cases in our state. In response, the Governor declared a state of emergency and urged everyone to take preventive measures to lower their risk and protect coworkers, family, and friends from the spread of the virus. For more detailed information and additional resources visit the [State of Michigan](#) or [Judiciary](#) coronavirus webpages.

Michigan's judiciary is heeding this advice and taking action to lower the risk to litigants, court staff, and the public who visit our courts. We are also committed to making sure that our justice system continues to operate. In this regard, I remind you of the following recommendations that I shared yesterday:

IF GOVERNOR WHITMER DECLARES AN EMERGENCY

- Comply with advice from state and county health departments
- Coordinate with funding unit on any potential disruption of business
- o Develop internal and external communications plan
- o Effectively communicate options for potential business interruption to court staff and to the public
- Implement plan for remote hearings whenever possible
- Adjourn hearings with vulnerable persons
- o Do not default or bench warrant individuals for failing to appear during period of emergency
- Adjourn jury trials
- o Civil jury trials should be adjourned
- o Criminal jury trials should be adjourned unless defendant is in custody or there have been other long delays

IMMEDIATELY INFORM YOUR SCAO REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:

- If court business is interrupted
- If any COVID-19-related activity affects your courthouse (e.g., COVID-19 quarantine order)

With respect to closing your court, consult with your regional administrator, local emergency management, public health officials, and your funding unit in order to make a decision that best fits local conditions. If you have any questions, please reach out to me or your regional administrator.

Warmly,

Bridget Mary McCormack
Chief Justice