

# Mississippi Association of Supervisors

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## CONFERENCE CALL RECAP WITH GOVERNOR TATE REEVES REGARDING MISSISSIPPI'S COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY

(3-25-20)

**DERRICK SURRETTE:** Introduced Governor Tate Reeves.

**GOVERNOR REEVES:** We are currently addressing the Emergency operation from yesterday's tornado in Tishomingo County. I've issued an executive order that addresses essential services, defines essential business and operations, and shutting down gatherings of 10 or more people statewide. We are recommending that all restaurants and bars suspend dine-in service in order to help slow the spread of COVID-19, but not including carryout or delivery orders. We shut down visitation to hospitals and nursing homes. We must ensure those in most vulnerable (over 65, compromised immune systems) position are protected. We must encourage them to stay at home. If each of our 410 supervisors could convince 100 constituents to stay home, 41,000 people would not be exposed and could help save many lives.

**DR. THOMAS DOBBS:** Overview of COVID19 – it's a virus that is spread similar to flu (cough, on surfaces, etc.). It can be transmitted airborne, but mostly through respiratory secretions. This virus causes several symptoms similar to the flu. Our biggest worry with this virus is the high mortality rate in those of 65 years or older and with compromised immune systems. There are well over 350 cases in MS and now 2 confirmed deaths. We expect cases and deaths to increase. Our goal is to prevent transmission. Please stay away from each other, limit group gathering sizes, stay away from nursing homes, churches, funerals, weddings – the worst outbreaks are from weddings and funerals, because of closeness/touching. This is hard but will not last forever. As far as transmission in workplace, as long as everyone keeps 6 feet distance and no more than 10 people, transmission is at a very low risk .

**GOVERNOR REEVES:** Local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) were very concerned last week because they could not receive supplies. We did get a couple of small orders on Monday and Wednesday. We are working on bringing in supplies to EMA and hospitals.

**MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MEMA) DIRECTOR GREG MICHEL:** The Tishomingo tornado is an example of why we must be prepared to respond to other events than just COVID-19. We are heading into April, the most dangerous month of the year for tornados. We sent out reminders to EMA directors that life safety must be priority. Please open a shelter in cases of extreme weather, despite COVID-19 concerns. We have done the best we can to send out Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the EMAs. Supplies are scarce but we are working to build the supply chain. We have received orders from national supply stockpile. Unlike Katrina where we were dealing with presidential declaration affecting small area, this situation is nationwide which is overwhelming the stockpile. It will be initially directed to higher affected areas. Mississippi is low on the demand chain, because our cases are much smaller than other states. We continue to reach out to other vendors to receive supplies. EMA

Directors should be the county's point-of-contact to request supplies. We have a large number of masks coming in within 48 hours and we should have good stock within the next 7 days. This will be prioritized to medical personnel on front lines. As long as we have it, we will keep pushing out materials to the counties until we hear you have enough. We initially pushed out materials early on and had some complaints on the quality. We asked EMAs to do visual inspections. Some were expired and could not be used.

**GOVERNOR REEVES:** One of the things the President and Vice President have been adamant about is that we all continue to use traditional supply chains. Please continue to use the contacts you have in place for supplies. Please do not rely solely on the state if you have a supply chain please continue to use them. We have just shy of 50,000 cases in the US and about half are in New York so most of the supplies will be sent to them and areas highly infected. We must use every avenue possible to get the supplies needed. We are telling the hospitals the same thing – both publicly and privately owned. Most have supply chains in place and should keep using if at all possible. US Senate did agree in the middle of the night last night on stimulus package. We are hoping that local governments will have some resources available. The legislation is about 1200 pages long. My staff is reviewing it now, but we don't have specifics on it right now. As it pertains to testing, more private testing facilities are coming. There are more hospitals doing testing. The National guard will be assisting the Department of Health on testing in rural areas. We still need to prioritize testing for healthcare workers and those with symptoms. If you do not have a fever over 100.4 with chest pain and/or cough, you do not need to be tested. We want to prioritize those already hospitalized and those in vulnerable populations (age, health).

**DR. THOMAS DOBBS:** We do not think we are at the peak yet. We expect more cases and more deaths. We are working on flattening the curve as soon as possible.

**GOVERNOR REEVES:** We believe we have the virus in every region of the state. We are monitoring those from New Orleans and Louisiana very closely who are traveling into MS. I spoke with Louisiana Governor over the weekend and we will continue to have conversations and look at possible travel restrictions. We are not putting those in place at this time.

**DERRICK SURRETTE:** Thanked Governor Tate Reeves for the statewide update.

**CLOSING NOTE:** There was a segment for questions and answers. If your county did not get an opportunity to ask a question regarding your county's concern, please submit your question to MAS via email to Yamaiky Gamez [YGamez@massup.org](mailto:YGamez@massup.org), and we will work on getting your questions over to the Governor's Office or another appropriate entity.