

# NEWS RELEASE

Public Information Department  
County of Warren



## Warren County Closing Public Access as Offices Remain Open

(WHITE TWP., NJ – March 16, 2020) – Warren County government offices will be closed to the public as of Tuesday, March 17, but employees will continue to work, the Board of Chosen Freeholders decided during an emergency meeting called to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The move is intended to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. County offices will continue to conduct business via telephone and email.

The Freeholders made the move after hearing reports from the county Health Officer, Public Safety Director, Prosecutor, Administrator and other officials.

“Government has to go forward. We’re here to do that,” Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner said.

The resolution entrusts county Administrator Alex Lazorisak with decisions concerning the COVID-19 coronavirus and day-to-day issues concerning public safety, health and welfare.

“I think this is a necessary step. We need to be mobile, we need to be able to act quickly,” Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski said.

While Warren County had not positive cases, Health Officer Peter Summers said it was only a matter of time before the disease is found in the county.



Warren County Health Officer Peter Summers speaks to the freeholder board during an emergency meeting. At the dais are (l-r) Chief Financial Officer Kim Francisco, county Counsel Joseph J. Bell IV, Freeholder James R. Kern III, Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner, Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski, Administrator Alex Lazorisak, and Deputy Clerk Holly Luberto.

Summers said his priorities are to:

- Keep the health care system running in the county.
- Protect the most vulnerable residents, such as senior citizens and those with compromised immune systems.
- Keep essential services operational.
- Reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Keep other community services operational.

“If we can help the hospitals, and help the elderly population ... we can weather this,”

Summers said.

“Warren County is really out in front of this,” with the steps county officials are taking, Acting Prosecutor James L. Pfeiffer said.

Freeholder James R. Kern III noted the county has set up a section on the home page of the county website, [www.co.warren.nj.us](http://www.co.warren.nj.us), where COVID-19 information and updates are posted. Earlier in the day, Kern and Lazorisak held a conference call for the county’s mayors, and 19 of the 22 municipalities participated to hear updates from the county Health Department.

All three freeholders praised the county workforce for their efforts and their flexibility in dealing with the pandemic. “This is changing very rapidly,” Kern remarked as he commended the county’s employees. “This is what public service is about, and they’re doing a great job,” he added.

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