

To All Department Heads and Employees of the City of Huntington:

As you may have already heard, Governor Holcomb has declared the state of Indiana is facing a public health emergency. The City has been working throughout the past week and weekend to prepare for necessary next steps.

Our first and foremost concern is the health and safety of you and your families. *An immediate first step was creating a City-wide COVID-19 Sick Bank* via the Board of Works on Monday, March 16, 2020. This is an additional benefit available to any full-time city employee that is undergoing care by a medical professional to assess whether they have contracted COVID-19. It provides a pool of paid sick days so that employees do not need to use personal sick days during the uncertain testing period for COVID-19. An employee utilizing the Sick Bank will need to be under the care of a healthcare professional and will submit a request to Director of Operations, Annette Carroll. Allotments are available in up to 5-day increments and renewable up to two times per incident for a total of 15 business days. Once test results have been returned or it is determined by the medical professional that no a test for COVID-19 is needed, the employee can either return to work or proceed with normal policies and procedures regarding personal sick days and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Any questions related to this policy or procedure may be directed to Annette Carroll, Director of Operations.

The second step was *establishing a Response Planning Team to develop and oversee the implementation of a City COVID-19 Preparedness Plan* on Tuesday, March 17th, 2020. This team has successfully developed a five stage progressive action plan to address escalation of public health issues. The team will meet daily to review the plan, assess developments over the previous 24 hours, and adjust the plan as needed in light of new information. We are committed to providing the necessary guidance and support all City employees need to remain safe and healthy while providing necessary services to the residents of this City.

Finally, *the next step is yours to take.* I recognize that many of us have been planning trips and making travel arrangements for spring break or other vacations. We are in the middle of a global, fast-moving and daily changing public health emergency. *I would respectfully ask that each of you planning to travel in the next two months strongly consider postponing or cancelling those trips in light of President Trump's advisement against discretionary travel.* As your employer, the City cannot prevent you from taking these trips. Please review the following information from the Center for Disease Control as you reconsider your planned trip: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>. This is a fast moving public health crisis and the situation can change drastically in a short amount of time. If you are flying somewhere, there is a chance you may find yourself stranded if flights are grounded. If you are planning a cruise, you should be aware that there are cruise ships not being allowed to return to port due to concerns pertaining to COVID-19. While we cannot prevent you from traveling, we are being advised to not allow employees that have been travelling to return to work without a 14-day quarantine period following your vacation. This will put tremendous strain on your coworkers that will be covering any shifts you are unable to work. I recognize that this will be disappointing and difficult conversations for you and your family but please take time to carefully consider the options available to you at this time.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

Mayor Richard Strick