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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

JEN DAULBY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

February 28, 2020

Dear Colleague:

As you know, the coronavirus has received significant public attention. The Committee on House Administration has consulted with both the Office of the Attending Physician (OAP) and Sergeant at Arms (SAA) about this issue. Each of those offices is separately providing information about the coronavirus to the House community. Those communications include information about the coronavirus, answers to frequently asked questions, and practical prevention techniques.

The Attending Physician, Dr. Brian P. Monahan, has also recorded two videos addressing frequently asked questions about the coronavirus. Those videos and additional information are available on the [OAP website](#). We encourage Members and staff to watch those videos and review additional information provided by the OAP and SAA. In addition, we want to highlight some additional information that may be of interest to you and your offices.

General updates. The Committee on House Administration, OAP, and SAA will share any additional information about the coronavirus of particular concern to the House community as it develops. To stay apprised of the most up to date and authoritative information about the coronavirus in general, Members and staff should check the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), at <https://www.cdc.gov/>. Members and staff can [sign up to receive email updates](#) directly from the CDC. This information is also available to the public.

Communicating with your constituents. In general, all content in official communications must be related to official business. Official business includes, among other things, federal issues of public concern. The coronavirus is a federal issue of public concern, so it is generally an appropriate topic to address in official communications.

Members are generally limited from sending mass mailings and mass communications in the 90 days prior to any primary or general election or caucus for any federal, state, or local election in which the Member is a candidate. However, [regulations](#) of the House Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Commission) expressly permit Members to send

communications regarding threats to life safety. The coronavirus qualifies as a threat to life safety, so mass mailings and mass communications limited to information about the coronavirus will generally be exempt from the blackout rule. A Member who is otherwise in a blackout period is strongly advised to get prior approval from the Commission for a communication about the coronavirus.

For specific questions about particular communications your office may wish to send, please contact the Commission directly, at (202) 225-9337 (majority) or (202) 226-0647 (minority). You can also [submit a request](#) for an Advisory Opinion online, at <https://frankingrequests.house.gov>.

Travel concerns. Members and staff contemplating international travel should check the CDC's website, at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>. As of this time, the CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to South Korea, the People's Republic of China, and Venezuela. The CDC further recommends that travelers to a number of other countries – including Italy, Japan, and others – practice enhanced precautions. The Department of State has also issued guidance regarding international travel and the coronavirus, which is available [here](#). All general travel advisories issued by State for specific countries are available [here](#).

Telework and telecommuting. The SAA is providing more information about continuity of operations planning (COOP). In general, COOP plans allow offices to consider the actions and resources needed to continue to operate in the event of an emergency. A COOP plan may include provisions for House staff to work remotely, such as by telework. Employees of an office that implements a previously established COOP plan may telework during the period that the COOP plan is in effect. More information about telecommuting, including a sample telecommuting agreement, is available on [CHA's website](#).

We hope this information is helpful. If you have further questions, please contact CHA at (202) 225-2061 (majority) or (202) 225-8281 (minority), the OAP at (202) 225-5421, or SAA at (202) 225-2456.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren
Chairperson



Rodney Davis
Ranking Member