

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2020

39th JUDICIAL DISTRICT – FRANKLIN AND FULTON COUNTIES

COVID-19 JUDICIAL EMERGENCY EXTENDED THROUGH APRIL 14, 2020 PER ORDER OF COURT FOR THE 39th JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURTS TO CONTINUE TO BE CLOSED EXCEPT FOR LIMITED EMERGENCY MATTERS

On March 30, 2020, President Judge Shawn D. Meyers issued a Third Supplemental Judicial Emergency Order which declares the 39th Judicial District to be under a state of “judicial emergency” and that the courts of the 39th Judicial District are closed up to and through April 14, 2020, subject to very limited emergency exceptions. This action is authorized by Chief Justice Thomas Saylor of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. While county/non-court offices within courthouses and other county facilities will remain open subject to the rules of access established by the county/non-court office, the courts, which include the Courts of Common Pleas and Magisterial District Judge courts, are closed with limited emergency exceptions. The decision of President Judge Meyers to extend the judicial emergency is in response to the continued spread of COVID-19 within the judicial district. The court will maintain access to justice while working in cooperation with county, regional and state government, federal judiciary efforts and the efforts of the private and public sector to minimize the community spread of COVID-19.

Parties who have matters scheduled during the period of March 30, 2020 and April 14, 2020 should contact their attorney or Court Administration at (717)-261-3848 to determine if their matter is still on the docket of cases to be heard.

Anyone wishing to make payments at a Magisterial District Judges’ court, cannot do so in person, but may make payment by mail, electronically, online, by phone or as may be permitted by the Magisterial District Judge.

Filing offices have alternate means for the filing of documents in order to substantially reduce direct interaction with staff, including drop boxes in the lobby of the courthouses, filing via email, and delivery of filings through the United States Postal Service and other filing services. Only parties and their counsel to emergency matters will be admitted for proceedings. All others who only have business of a non-emergency nature with the court will be denied access to the courts. Jury trials, both criminal and civil, as well as jury selection scheduled during the emergency period are canceled.

President Judge Meyers, the entire board of Judges and Court Administration appreciate the cooperation that has been provided by County government, the Board of Commissioners, the various public and private offices affected and the members of the bar associations of both counties who have joined together with the community at large to ensure all reasonable efforts are made to preserve and protect the public safety while still providing access to the courts.

President Judge Meyers asks that all members of the public and the attorneys who practice in the Commonwealth act in unison to stop the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Please try to minimize unnecessary travel to and from the courts and offices in which courts are housed so as to limit exposure to third parties. Please keep space between yourself and others when in the courthouse and facilities that house courts. When possible communicate via paper mail service, telephone, email or other electronic means so as to limit person to person contact. Please stay home if you are sick and practice good hygiene.

The Court, in conjunction with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, and local County Governments in the 39th Judicial District will continue to closely monitor developments on the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

For up-to-date information, visit:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Department of Health: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

Together as a community we can decrease the spread of the coronavirus.

For more information, please contact Mark Singer, District Court Administrator for the 39th Judicial District, at msinger@franklincountypa.gov or 717-261-3848.