



**MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN ANNOUNCES IMPORTANT UPDATES TO  
BUFFALO'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

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*Mayor Brown thanks ECMC COVID Unit staff for their efforts on the frontline of the Coronavirus crisis*

Buffalo, NY –Today, Mayor Byron W. Brown provided lunch to health care professionals at ECMC to express his appreciation for their hard work during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency. Mayor Brown thanked them for providing excellent care to Buffalo Police Officer Juan Phillips, a 37-year veteran of the Department who has been at ECMC for the last month undergoing treatment for COVID-19. The School Resource Officer's family says he is making progress in his recovery. Mayor Brown also thanked hospital staff for caring for other Buffalo Fire and Police personnel, as well as City residents, who are patients at the hospital. The lunches, prepared by Kevin's Catering, were delivered this afternoon by the Mayor to dozens of COVID Unit caregivers who have been working around the clock since this crisis began.

Mayor Brown stated, "Our health care workers are the heroes of our community. I am so grateful for their endless efforts to provide quality care for all residents of the City of Buffalo and Western New York. I thank them for their dedication to the health and well-being of residents during this emergency and beyond. Thank you for being the miracle workers we need right now."

**Mayor Brown provides COVID-19 update on the Fire and Police Departments**

Mayor Brown provided an update on the number of Coronavirus infections at the Buffalo Fire and Police Departments.

- 13 Firefighters are currently positive for the virus, and 32 others are on administrative leave as a precaution, 25 firefighters have recovered and returned to work;
- 4 Police Officers are currently positive for the virus while 21 officers are out on administrative leave. 52 officers have recovered and returned to work.

**Border crossing restrictions extended**

Acting Secretary Chad Wolf announced today that all non-essential travel between the United States and Canada will continue to be restricted for at least an additional 30 days. Essential travel over the border is permitted for medical or emergency purposes, work, commercial vehicles including tractor trailers and those on Government business.

**The Beverly Gray Business Exchange Center to host "Recovery and Resiliency Virtual Workshop" for small businesses**

Mayor Brown announced today that on Thursday, April 30th, the Beverly Gray Business Exchange Center is hosting a virtual workshop from 1:30 pm to 3 pm to help small businesses jump-start their recovery and resiliency efforts. Business owners can register for the workshop at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/beverly-gray-center-small-business-recovery-resiliency-workshop-virtual-tickets-102491970242>

### **New stimulus payment protections against debt collectors**

New York State Attorney General Letitia James took action last week to block debt collectors from raiding emergency stimulus payments authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). Attorney General James issued official guidance to New York State banking institutions, creditors, and debt collectors, making clear that financial relief provided through stimulus payments are exempt from garnishment under New York law. The CARES Act authorized the U.S. Department of Treasury to send billions of dollars to Americans struggling as a result of the economic fallout of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health crisis, but these emergency stimulus payments were not designated as exempt from garnishment, allowing debt collectors to potentially benefit before consumers.

Attorney General James' guidance is based on multiple state and federal consumer protection laws and clarifies that any attempt to garnish stimulus funds from New Yorkers will be treated as a violation of these laws. For more information, visit [ag.ny.gov](http://ag.ny.gov)

### **Parking reminder for tonight**

Mayor Brown is reminding residents that tonight there is a 6 pm parking switchover, from 6 pm Monday to 6 pm Thursday. The alternate side parking on these streets are critical for emergency vehicle access.

### **Water restorations continue**

The City of Buffalo is restoring service to all residents who have had their water turned off. To restore service call 847-1065.

### **Mayor Brown urges residents to participate in the 2020 Census**

Mayor Brown continues to encourage residents to fill out their census forms. As of April 20th, the City's response rate is 39.3%, which lags far behind the 50.5% national response rate. Without an accurate count, the City of Buffalo will lose hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding needed for community programming that will be essential in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. Please encourage your family, friends and neighbors to complete their forms at [2020Census.gov](http://2020Census.gov).

### **Virtual Earth Week kicks off**

Mayor Brown is calling on City residents to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day by taking part in a week-long series of virtual activities this week. Earth Day is April 22, 2020. Residents are encouraged to sketch out some "Love your Earth" messages today and tag us on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter @recyclebuffalo. Tuesday's virtual Earth Week activity asks residents to use recycled materials to make a craft. For more information, go to [www.buffalony.gov](http://www.buffalony.gov).

### **Grocery distribution for families in need returns Friday**

On Friday, April 24, the Belle Center will be giving away bags of free groceries to families in need at 104 Maryland Street. The distribution runs from 9 am to 12:30 pm.

### **Buffalo LIT honors Buffalo's 188th birthday**

Tonight, in partnership with the Buffalo Landmark Illumination Team (BUFFALOLIT), Mayor Brown announced that on April 20, 2020, our City's landmark buildings and structures will be lit in BLUE AND WHITE in celebration of the City of Buffalo's 188th birthday.

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