



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

March 31, 2020

Thomas G. Saylor, JD, LL.M.
Chief Justice, Pennsylvania Supreme Court
601 Commonwealth Avenue
P.O. Box 61260
Suite 1500
Harrisburg, PA 17106

Dear Chief Justice Saylor:

Thank you for the efforts of the court system to take steps to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by closing the courts statewide, except for essential services. In my letter of March 18th, I asked that the courts consider closure through the period through April 3, 2020. I now write to request that you consider extending the closure of the courts through April 30, 2020.

Governor Wolf and his administration remain committed to doing their utmost to combat the COVID-19 threat. To that end, the administration has expanded from the prior directives requiring the closure of non-life sustaining businesses and issued new directives expanding the period for the closure of Pennsylvania schools and also requiring residents in most Pennsylvania counties to stay at home through April 30, 2020. All these mitigation efforts are aimed at the need to “flatten” the curve of the pandemic and prevent so great a rise of cases in the Commonwealth that our health care system is unable to provide services to all persons in need of care. That such a circumstance is possible is clearly shown by the experience of Italy. In addition, there is some indication that when mitigation efforts are abandoned too quickly, or lifted too soon, any beneficial effects will not materialize or will be negated. For this reason, I supported the Governor’s extension of the mitigation period until the end of April. I strongly urge the Court to follow that lead and consider extending the closure of the courts until that time as well.

The administration urges that such measures that have been in place continue to be necessary to protect the health and lives of Pennsylvanians.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RL Levine'.

Rachel L. Levine, MD
Secretary of Health