

Message to the Brooklyn Law School Community from Dean Michael T. Cahill

March 2, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring a new coronavirus that causes a respiratory disease known as COVID-19, which was first identified in Wuhan, China, and has now been detected in at least 65 countries, including cases in the United States. As of March 2, there has been one confirmed case of COVID-19 in New York City, and health officials are preparing for the possibility of a widespread outbreak. I am writing to inform the Brooklyn Law School community about the Law School's efforts to address this situation and the serious concerns it raises.

We have created a task force of key faculty and administrators to plan our response to potential exposure to COVID-19 by our students, faculty, staff, or visitors to the Law School. Obviously, our top priority in developing a response plan is to ensure the health and safety of our community; our second priority is to minimize disruption of our normal operations in the event of an outbreak. Be assured that our response will be driven by evidence and prudence, rather than speculation or irrational fear. This is a time for sobriety and solidarity, not panic or prejudice. There is no current reason to anticipate a major impact on our activities, but we must prepare for various possibilities so that whatever arises, we will be ready, resolved, and resilient.

We are monitoring the situation daily and have established this page on our website where we will regularly post updates, important links, and information about available resources. Please check this page frequently. In addition to sharing useful information, it is important to ensure we combat misinformation; accordingly, I would encourage our students, faculty, and staff to review the [CDC anti-stigma guidelines regarding COVID-19](#).

As some of you know, we announced earlier the cancellation of our summer-abroad program in Beijing, China, this year. Last Friday, February 28, the U.S. Department of State issued a "level 3" advisory recommending avoidance of non-essential travel to Italy due to concerns about COVID-19. Accordingly, given that we do not know when this advisory will be lifted and wish to avoid any disruption of plans, we have now decided to suspend our summer program in Bologna, Italy, this year as well. We are developing alternative courses to take place here in Brooklyn over the same time period, so that students who were relying on the study-abroad credits will have other options. We will follow up soon with further details. Students interested in pursuing such courses should contact Vice Dean Christina Mulligan.

While the figures suggest a higher mortality rate for COVID-19 than for the common flu, thus far, more than 80 percent of confirmed COVID-19 cases are not severe. However, everyone carrying the virus, even those with only mild symptoms, poses a risk to others, particularly the elderly and those with respiratory problems or compromised immune systems. If you experience flu-like symptoms, particularly fever, cough, and shortness of breath, please

contact your health care provider as soon as possible. And as is always the case, if you are sick, please DO NOT come to school. Take care of yourself, and avoid risk to others. Keep your professors apprised of any classes you need to miss, but do not worry about having to miss classes for illness; focus first on your own health.

As we await further developments, we can all do our part to help keep our community healthy and well. Common-sense practices like frequent hand washing, covering a cough, staying home when sick, and avoiding touching your nose, mouth, and eyes, can go a long way toward helping prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

If you have any questions, please contact **Mercedes Ravelo, Director of Public Safety, at 718-780-7942 or at mercedes.ravelo@brooklaw.edu.**