

2020-0150R-CM

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

2020 MAR 17 PM 3:49

IN RE: MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURT'S FUNCTIONS DURING THE CHESTER COUNTY TEMPORARY CORONAVIRUS POLICY

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY WITHIN 15th JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND
SECOND AMENDMENT TO ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 4-2020

AND NOW, this 17th day of March, 2020, in consideration of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's March 16, 2020 order declaring a statewide judicial emergency until April 14, 2020 on account of COVID-19 ("coronavirus"), and authorizing president judges to declare judicial emergencies in their judicial districts through April 14, 2020, pursuant to Pa.R.J.A. No. 1952(B), it is hereby declared that there is a judicial emergency within the 15th Judicial District. In order to better protect the health and safety of court personnel, court users and others, it is hereby **ORDERED** and **DECREED** that the March 12, 2020 Administrative Order 4-2020 is further amended as follows:

1. All civil jury trials, criminal jury trials and civil arbitration hearings are hereby canceled and suspended through April 13, 2020, and shall be rescheduled for a future date. Jury duty is also canceled and suspended for this same period of time. By declaration of this court, separately filed with the Prothonotary of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the operation of Rule of Criminal Procedure 600 is suspended in this 15th Judicial District for any period of delay caused to criminal cases as a result of this order, or the cancellation and suspension of criminal jury trials.

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2. The following miscellaneous signing court matters are hereby canceled and suspended through April 13, 2020, and shall be rescheduled for a future date: ARD hearings, name change hearings, summary appeal hearings, and civil forfeiture hearings.
3. Beginning the week of March 23, 2020 and through April 13, 2020, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation related hearings scheduled before the miscellaneous signing judge shall be canceled and suspended, and shall be rescheduled for a future date.
4. All criminal preliminary hearings shall be canceled and suspended through April 13, 2020, and shall be rescheduled for a future date, unless the parties agree to schedule them before that date.
5. The following matters before the magisterial district courts are hereby canceled and suspended through April 13, 2020, and shall be rescheduled for a future date: all summary trials/ hearings.
6. Until further order, all public gatherings (excluding weddings) in common pleas and magisterial district court facilities, other than for court proceedings, hearings and trials, are hereby canceled and suspended through April 13, 2020, and shall be rescheduled for a future date. Such public gatherings include group visits, mock trials, and naturalization ceremonies. Judges performing wedding ceremonies shall require the wedding participants to limit wedding groups to ten or fewer people.
7. Until further order, mandatory parenting classes for litigants involved in custody matters shall be moved to an online format.
8. Until further order, common pleas judges, magisterial district judges and court department heads are authorized to reduce office staff to better protect employees who, because of their age, personal characteristics or medical conditions, have a heightened risk of danger from

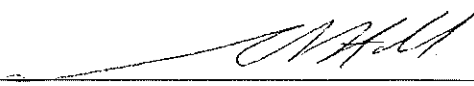
coronavirus. Any common pleas, magisterial district judge or department head who him or herself similarly has such a heightened risk shall, when deemed appropriate, work remotely with advanced communication technology and reduce his or her court/office time. Office staff may also be reduced if there is insufficient work for them to do.

9. Until further order, common pleas and magisterial district judges are authorized to reduce hours of court operations to those necessary to perform their essential functions, hold scheduled hearings, accept filings, etc. Any reduction of those hours shall be posted by the magisterial district judges on the exterior entrance door to their court facilities.
10. Until further order, the supervising judge of the common pleas criminal judges may reduce attendance of criminal judges within the Justice Center to no less than one judge for any day to perform all anticipated criminal duties, including emergency duties which would normally be handled by the miscellaneous signing judge.
11. Until further order, the supervising judge of the common pleas family judges may reduce attendance of family judges within the Justice Center to no less than one judge for any day to perform all anticipated family court duties, including emergency duties which would normally be handled by the signing family court judge.
12. Until further order, the supervising judge of the common pleas orphans' court judges may reduce attendance of orphans' court judges within the Justice Center to no less than one judge for any day to perform all anticipated orphans' court duties, including emergency duties which would normally be handled by the signing orphans' court judge.
13. Until further order, the court of common pleas department heads shall use appropriate discretion to reduce crowding/personal contact and maximize the use of advanced communication technology to provide their departments' services.

14. These additional modifications to the 15th Judicial District's functions supersede and replace any modifications described within the March 12, 2020 Administrative Order 4-2020 and the March 13, 2020 Amendment to that Administrative Order to the extent that there is any conflict between these modifications and those preceding modifications.

15. This Second Amendment to Administrative Order 4-2020 shall be effective immediately.

BY THE COURT:



JOHN L. HALL P.J.