



Friend –

Below please find the Murphy office update on COVID-19.

As always, if you need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our Hartford or Washington, D.C. offices.

Here's what you need to know this week:

- Today, Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal [renewed their call for Congress to pass a COVID-19 relief bill](#) at a press conference in Hartford. The Senators stressed the need for additional federal funding to help families, workers, health care professionals and small businesses suffering due to the pandemic.
- Governor Ned Lamont [announced](#) that Connecticut is the first state in the nation to provide a learning device to every PK-12 student in need, achieving a major milestone in the fight to close the K-12 digital divide in Connecticut, particularly as many schools moved toward remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Following his [roundtable listening session with restaurant owners in Connecticut](#), Senator Murphy [published an op-ed in the Hartford Courant](#) on Small Business Saturday calling on people in Connecticut to continue supporting small businesses and laying out what the federal government can do to make sure our businesses stay afloat.
- Murphy [visited Bristol Community Health Center](#) to thank health care workers and encourage CT residents to continue following public health guidance like wearing a mask, practicing social distancing and avoiding large gatherings.
- Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal joined 12 of their colleagues in a letter led by Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota [in urging the National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) to prioritize efforts to study and understand the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of children and young adults](#). Recent reports have highlighted a substantial increase in anxiety and depression among children and young adults since the beginning of the pandemic—with one study finding that nearly one-third of high school students surveyed reported feeling unhappy or depressed in recent months.
- Senator Murphy joined a bipartisan letter with 49 of his Senate colleagues in calling for the expansion of access to telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries during the COVID-19 pandemic to be made permanent. In their letter, the lawmakers highlight the growing use and benefits of telehealth during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, as patients seek to avoid traveling to hospitals and other providers and instead receive care at home. New data shows that the

number of Medicare beneficiaries using telehealth services in late April increased by over 13,000 percent relative to a week of services before the pandemic.

- Governor Ned Lamont [announced that 154 nonprofit arts organizations in Connecticut will be receiving \\$9 million in grants](#) this month under a program [initiated by his administration](#) to provide support to the state's arts community amid the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Qualifying organizations will receive a base grant of \$5,000. For organizations that have raised funds between March 10 and November 1, 2020, the program will offer a supplemental match of up to 50 percent of contributed income during that period. The program uses federal CARES Act funding from the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund.
- REMINDER: the enrollment period for farmers [to apply](#) to Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) ends next week on Friday, December 11th. This program provides direct relief to producers facing market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19.
- ICYMI: [PURA has extended the enrollment period for programs to prevent heat source shut-offs for both residential and non-residential customers through at least February 9, 2021](#). Further, the Winter Protection Program, which protects eligible households during the winter months, is also in effect from November 1, 2020 through May 1, 2021. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your utility bill, you can contact your utility company and ask if you are eligible to be "coded hardship" and enrolled in the Winter Protection Program. If you are ineligible for hardship status or a non-residential customer, ask to enroll in a COVID-19 Payment Plan. [Additional information regarding these programs and other assistance can be found here](#).

For information on federal coronavirus relief, including help for small businesses, direct cash payments and more, visit murphy.senate.gov/coronavirus. This page provides answers to frequently asked questions and gives a summary of available programs and funding.

For the latest information about keeping you or your family safe go to cdc.gov/coronavirus. For resources and information about Connecticut's response visit ct.gov/coronavirus.

I hope you found this letter helpful. You can get the latest updates Senator Murphy's work in the Senate by following him on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to our offices in Hartford or in Washington, DC.



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[If you would like to opt-out of future coronavirus updates, please click here.](#)