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## FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

March 26, 2020



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### COVID-19 — MONTANA — 3/23/2020

**Montana Legislature.** The Montana Legislature was not scheduled to be in session in 2020. Interim committee meetings have been cancelled.

**State of Emergency.** On March 12, 2020, Governor Steve Bullock declared a State of Emergency in Montana related to COVID-19.

**School Closures.** Schools will be closed from March 16, 2020, until at least March 27, 2020. Districts will continue to receive all state payments during the initial two-week closure as budgeted and appropriated by the Montana legislature. Montana has submitted a waiver request for standardized tests to the U.S. Department of Education.

**Additional State Measures.** As of March 23, 2020, additional state measures include:

- Closure of dine-in food service and alcoholic beverage businesses and other activities that pose enhanced health risks. The measure is set to expire March 27, 2020, but will likely be extended. Businesses included in the measure are health clubs, movie and performance theaters, bingo halls, and casinos.
- Suspension of visitation at all Montana Department of Corrections facilities. All parole hearings will be facilitated through video conferencing.
- Expanded access to telemedicine services to prevent unnecessary gatherings at health care facilities and elimination of language that prevents Medicaid from paying for telemedicine services if the patient and provider are in the same community.
- Holding schools harmless for lost instructional hours due to school closures. Transportation reimbursements will continue to schools to allow the flexibility of using resources for delivery of educational materials and nutrition services.
- Placement of emergency rules to make unemployment benefits accessible to workers who have been laid off, and waiver of the typical one week waiting period before receiving benefits.
- An extension of payment and filing deadlines for 2019 individual income taxpayers to July 15, 2020, in accordance with the new federal filing deadline.

**COVID-19 Reported Cases.** As of March 23, 2020, there are 34 confirmed cases in Montana.

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