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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

From: Eric M. Hoffman, Prosecuting Attorney  
Subject: Press Release  
Date: March 15, 2020 10:00 a.m.

**Delaware County Prosecutor's Office COVID-19 Precautions**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially classified COVID-19 virus as a global pandemic. President of the United States Donald Trump has declared a National State of Emergency. The Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases with the National Institutes of Health has said that "It's certainly going to get worse before it gets better" and that Americans should prepare to engage in containment measures. The Indiana Governor has declared a public health emergency. The Delaware County Health Department has declared a local health emergency. One thing is clear, we are all in this together and everyone should take the necessary precautions to prevent or stop the spread of the virus.

I have received information and guidance from the CDC, Indiana Supreme Court, Indiana Department of Health, Delaware County Emergency Management, and the Delaware County Health Department. The CDC has said that risk to the general public of exposure remains low, but it is incumbent upon each of us to respond appropriately as events evolve. The experts have said that the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person who are in close contact with one another. Governmental offices like the Prosecutor's Office interact with a large number of people on a daily basis. The CDC has encouraged employers to implement "social distancing measures" which means to increase the physical space between employees and the general public or to avoid such contact entirely.

Therefore, out of an abundance of caution and after much deliberation, I have decided to close the Prosecutor's Office to the public effective Monday March 16, 2020, until Monday April 13, 2020. This includes the criminal division as well as the child support or family support division. This closure means the following:

- 1) Any reference herein to "the Prosecutor's Office" includes both the criminal division as well as the family support division of the Prosecutor's Office.
- 2) The Prosecutor's Office will be closed to the public (anyone other than Prosecutor's Office employees or law enforcement officers) effective Monday March 16, 2020, until Monday April 13, 2020. Again, this includes the criminal division as well as the child support or family support division. The main door to the Prosecutor's Office shall remain closed and secured.

- 3) During this time period, the Prosecutor's Office staff WILL be in the office during regular office hours conducting the day-to-day work of the office. We will be available by phone and email. Luckily, most contact with the public can be conducted over the phone or via email. There *may* be instances where a person must come to the Prosecutor's Office in person. In that case, a representative of the Office will contact you and make the necessary arrangements. Precautionary measures for entry into the Delaware County Building will be determined by the Board of the Delaware County Commissioners.
- 4) The deputy prosecutors and I will continue to appear in court as required by our local judges and the Indiana Supreme Court to represent the State of Indiana.
- 5) Any and all appointments or meetings that are currently scheduled to take place in the Prosecutor's Office from March 16, 2020, to Monday April 13, 2020, are hereby CANCELLED. A representative from the Office will contact you to either reschedule or simply conduct business over the phone.
- 6) Any depositions that are currently scheduled to take place in the Prosecutor's Office from March 16, 2020, to Monday April 13, 2020, are hereby CANCELLED. The parties will reschedule them for a date after April 13, 2020.
- 7) Effective immediately and lasting until Monday April 13, 2020, all meetings with external stakeholders will be held remotely.
- 8) Effective immediately and lasting until Monday April 13, 2020, all out-of-state work travel for our staff is CANCELLED.
- 9) Effective immediately and lasting until Monday April 13, 2020, all in-state work travel will be reviewed and approved by the Prosecuting Attorney on a case-by-case basis.
- 10) A copy of this release shall be posted on the front door of the Criminal Division as well as the Family Support Division of the Prosecutor's Office.

On April 13, 2020 I will reassess the situation after reviewing current information and advisories from experts in the health care and infectious disease professions. I apologize for any inconvenience these precautionary measures may cause. However, based on the information and guidance from the experts in the field, I believe these are responsible, proactive steps that our office can take to help curb the spread of COVID-19, protect our staff and the public, and ensure the continued functioning of our Office.

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