

# Memo

**To:** Munster Town Council  
**CC:** Town Manager Dustin Anderson  
**From:** Chief of Police Stephen Scheckel  
**Date:** March 23, 2020  
**Re:** Emergency Response

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The Northwest Indiana Information Sharing and Security Alliance (NISSA) was founded by the U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Indiana, following the floods of 2008. The flooding impacted all Northwest Indiana, including all our critical infrastructure. Lessons learned after the flooding helped us to understand the importance of fostering an alliance between the public and private sectors. Since then, NISSA has had regular meetings focused on working toward set goals in order to better prepare us for the next disaster.

The District 1 Hospital Coalition is a member of NISSA and is comprised of the sixteen (16) hospitals in a five (5) county area, namely: Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Jasper and Newton counties. Last week this coalition requested assistance from NISSA, specifically to support their mission in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this request, we have established an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Gary/Chicago International Airport main terminal.

At the EOC, an Incident Management Team coordinates all activities associated with implementing our Emergency Pandemic Response Plan for District 1. Although we learned a great deal from the flooding of 2008, our task now is significantly more complex. Specifically, the flooding itself was contained to a limited geographical area, making support from outside resources more readily available; the worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic by nature, has all geographic areas frantically competing for the same limited resources.

Despite these complexities, we have been successful in acquiring resources from our private sector partners to support our hospitals and first responders. This past Friday alone, we were able to secure over 2,200 N-95 masks along with other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); these items are in the process of being distributed based on priority need. In addition, our center has identified additional space that can be used to alleviate overcrowding of our hospitals. We have also secured another site that can serve as a quarantine facility, should one be necessary.

In summary, we are exercising our District 1 Pandemic Response Plan. It gives me comfort to inform you that over the past ten (10) years we have participated in numerous full-scale exercises in order to prepare for a day which we hoped would never come. Although that day is now here, our team is well positioned to meet these ever-changing challenges. We are grateful to have the support of our elected officials, our community and our private partners; this pandemic has far reaching implications, and it is imperative that we all continue to stand together and support each other during this unprecedented time.