

IN RE: COURT OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas hereby activates a modified version of its Pandemic Concept of Operations Plan to address the COVID-19 virus. This Court is open to do the people's business and will remain open. 28 U.S.C. § 452. But, to address the significant health concerns presented and to reduce risks, operations will be modified and gradually scaled back to essentials.

First, all optional large-scale public events scheduled at court facilities in March and April are postponed. These events include the mock trials involving Bowen Law School students scheduled for April 14th and 15th, as well as the Naturalization Ceremony scheduled for April 17th.

Second, the Court orders notice in all cases, civil and criminal, of possible exposure to COVID-19. If an attorney or party reasonably suspects (erring on the side of caution) that a scheduled hearing, trial, or deposition may involve contact with an individual who may be infected by COVID-19, or has been in contact within the past fourteen days with such a person, the attorney or party must immediately give notice to all parties and the Court. After notice, the parties must promptly meet and confer by telephone about the best way to conduct the proceeding while protecting public health. Among other things, the parties should consider videoconferencing, alternative participants, and rescheduling. If the Court needs to resolve any disagreement, or take any other action, the parties must promptly file a joint report.

Third, all civil jury trials scheduled between 18 March 2020 and 30 April 2020 are cancelled.

Fourth, the Court will, as needed, begin the transition to videoconferencing in all preliminary criminal proceedings. Trials in criminal cases will proceed as scheduled until further notice.

SO ORDERED.

songestall J.

D.P. MÄRSHALL JR. CHIEF JUDGE

13 March 2020