

**STATEMENT TO THE JUDICIARY AND THE DELAWARE BAR  
SUPREME COURT OF DELAWARE**

**CHIEF JUSTICE COLLINS J. SEITZ, JR.**

**March 12, 2021**

Dear Judicial Officers, Judicial Branch Employees, Justice Partners and Members of the Bar:

Thank you for your patience and understanding as the Delaware Courts have addressed the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to monitor COVID-19 trends in Delaware. I am happy to report that the latest news is encouraging. The rate of positive tests, hospitalizations and deaths are all down significantly from the peak in January and vaccinations are underway.

In Delaware vaccine is just starting to be made available to the judicial branch and our justice partners. We will be providing details as vaccine events are set up. While we have plans in place to stage vaccination clinics for the judiciary and justice partners, if an opportunity arises to get vaccinated outside our effort, don't wait - take it.

Assuming the downward trend in COVID-19 cases continues, and vaccine becomes more widely available as promised, we anticipate moving in June to Phase 3 of the Courts Reopening Plan. Phase 3 means the resumption of more in-person hearings and jury trials. The Phase 3 details are available at <https://courts.delaware.gov/aoc/courtsreopeningplan.pdf> on the Delaware Courts website. In Phase 3, the Delaware Courts will maintain our current health safety precautions that include COVID-19 screening and temperature checks at the entrances to our court facilities, mask requirements and social distancing. With the backlog of criminal cases, those cases will be given priority.

We will only move to Phase 3 if it is safe for our employees, justice partners, and the public. If conditions change for the worse, we will re-evaluate the move to Phase 3. We are mindful that while the COVID-19 trends currently look good, we are not yet past this pandemic and must not let our guard down. It is important for everyone to continue to act responsibly by wearing a mask, practicing social distancing and washing your hands regularly.

The end of the pandemic won't be like flipping a switch. If we are diligent and trust the experts, things will improve every day. The end of this pandemic is in sight. I ask for your patience for a little while longer. Brighter days are ahead.