



March 12, 2020

Dear Friendly Sons,

It is with the utmost regret that I must inform you that I am postponing the 115th Annual Dinner of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of Lackawanna County, scheduled to be held Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at Genetti Manor. This postponement, with a final decision on formally canceling to be made at a later date, is for concern for the spread and infection involving the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). My decision follows an extensive consultation with an Infectious Disease colleague who is a current national advisor to the NSA and CDC, as well as personal review of CDC guidelines and data.

The rationale for this decision is based in part on the following points of information:

- COVID -19 is known to be highly contagious.
- There is a high likelihood that there are infected individuals within Lackawanna County that have not yet been detected, and may not be detected for days or weeks, even though they may be contagious.
- An emerging CDC recommendation is for any individual over 60 years of age, or if chronically ill, or immunocompromised, to avoid gatherings of 1,000 people or more.
- An even more strict and evolving CDC recommendation may state that all individuals avoid gatherings of 25 people or more of non- relatives.
- COVID -19 has an estimated 3-4% mortality rate in people infected who are over 60 years of age, or chronically ill, or immunocompromised. *(The Friendly Sons dinner would have a significant participation within this age demographic.)*

I realize that this postponement is unprecedented in our Society's history. However, I am confident that it is the most appropriate action at this time to ensure the safety of our dinner participants and community. My personal disappointment is profound. Regardless, the Friendly Sons will move forward.

Further details related to the formal cancellation will follow in time.

Sincerely,

W. David FitzPatrick, M.D.
President, Friendly Sons of St. Patrick