

National Health Emergencies!

As the Covid 19 Pandemic spreads across America, many of the most vulnerable are without important information readily accessible to their sighted peers. Without helping, such would be the plight of our State's citizens who are blind and deaf/blind.

Imagine facing COVID-19 in this age of social distancing unable to clearly see or hear.

For tens of thousands of deaf-blind Americans, who have severe hearing and sight impairment, the scope of the outbreak and its new normal have posed unique challenges to daily life.

For those who are blind or deaf/blind in their way of communicating and their culture, everything relies on touch, now they're not allowed to touch, and now they have to practice social distancing.

Deaf-blind Americans survive by touch: hand-over-hand signing to communicate; fingers scanning braille public signs for mobility; hugs and handshakes to feel connected. While not everyone experiences complete darkness and total silence, advocates say touch is critical -- and now comes with significant risk of contagion.

The requirement to stay 6 feet away from other people is actually not safe for a person who is blind. A blind person needs to touch his/her guide.

In an effort to do our part, KBTI immediately made Coronavirus safety guidelines accessible in Braille to every County Health Department in the State of Kansas. The importance of making such information equally accessible in Braille is not something to be taken lightly.

As an organization committed by mission to enrich the lives of people who are blind deaf/blind, KBTI is taking steps to keep them safe, supported and informed during the COVID-19 outbreak.