TO: The New Hampshire Library Community

In my email to the library community on March 25th I stated that in my opinion common sense should be the guiding principle in what we do with respect to public library services during this pandemic. I stand by that statement. Since I posted that email the Governor has issued Emergency order #17 which reads: 

Emergency Order #17 Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 Closure of non-essential businesses and requiring Granite Staters to stay at home. In this order the Governor is clearly telling the public to stay home and to limit interactions with other people because in a pandemic everyone! everyone! is a potential vector. The Department of Business and Economic Affairs on its web site has the following statement:

Businesses and organizations, essential or not, are encouraged to continue their operations through a remote means (i.e., telework) that will not require employees, customers, or the public to report to the company or organization’s physical facility.

Most of our libraries are well positioned to do what the BEA is suggesting because of our extensive investment in digital resources.

As has been said in the discussions on the NHAIS list and is clearly stated in section 6 of Emergency order #17, the decision of which if any library services and how that are provided during this pandemic is a local decision.

Emergency order #17 Part 6
“ This order shall not apply to State Government, local and county governments, local and county legislative bodies, the General Court, or the Judicial Branch.”

I firmly believe that the decision library trustees make regarding this decision about library services should be made on the advice of Health professionals. This is a health crisis; not a philosophical or political question or discussion.

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