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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**COURT REMAINS OPEN, MOVES TO REMOTE APPEARANCES FOR ALL HEARINGS**

OLATHE, KS – Chief Judge Thomas Kelly Ryan announced today that beginning Monday, March 30, the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court will move to 100% remote access for ALL hearings. Signs to this effect will be posted and will include phone numbers to call with questions.

“After consultation with our Pandemic Response Team, we made the tough decision to stop allowing anyone other than the judge (and administrative assistant) to be present in our courtrooms for any hearings or proceedings,” said Chief Judge Ryan. “The number of positive cases is escalating at a rapid pace here in our County and throughout our metropolitan area. We cannot jeopardize ourselves or the citizens who would otherwise be in the courtroom for emergency hearings.”

“Over the last two weeks, the court has worked with the Johnson County Sheriff and Justice Information Management System staff to update our technology,” said District Court Judge Jim Vano. “This Allows for remote appearances in as many cases as possible. We are moving into the next phase of our COVID-19 response to allow emergency hearings such as first and second appearances, protection from abuse and stalking, and temporary orders of custody to be conducted remotely.”

Finally, Chief Judge Ryan stated, “The current situation is one that presents challenges to the Court’s normal operating procedures. We are looking at all of the ways in which we might temporarily alter those procedures to minimize risk, while still attending to the Court’s core responsibilities. We appreciate the cooperation and patience of the public as we work to implement these changes in procedure.”

Each division will work with parties to provide guidance in the use of remote appearance technology. All remote appearances are conducted at no cost to Court users. Visit [www.courts.jocogov.org](http://www.courts.jocogov.org) for up-to-date information on individual dockets. We continue to update all notices for each department online.

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