# New MDHHS Epidemic Order Allows Indoor Group Exercise, Non-Contact Sports

*Gatherings remain limited, group exercise and non-contact sports now open to support mental and physical health*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LANSING, MICH. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) updated its epidemic order today to allow re-opening of additional activities where Michiganders can remain masked and socially distanced, as this has been scientifically shown to slow the virus. This includes indoor group exercise and non-

contact sports. The new order is effective Saturday, Jan. 16 and will last until Sunday, Jan. 31.

“The efforts we have made together to protect our families, frontline workers and small business owners are working. While there has been a slight uptick in our percent positivity rate, our cases per million have plateaued and more hospital beds are becoming available. Today, we are confident that MDHHS can lift some of the protocols that were previously in place,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “Michigan is once again standing out as a nationwide leader in fighting this virus, and we must continue working to keep it that way. One of the most important things Michiganders can do is to make a plan to get the safe and effective vaccine when it’s available to you. And as always, mask up and maintain six feet of social distancing. We will end this pandemic together.”

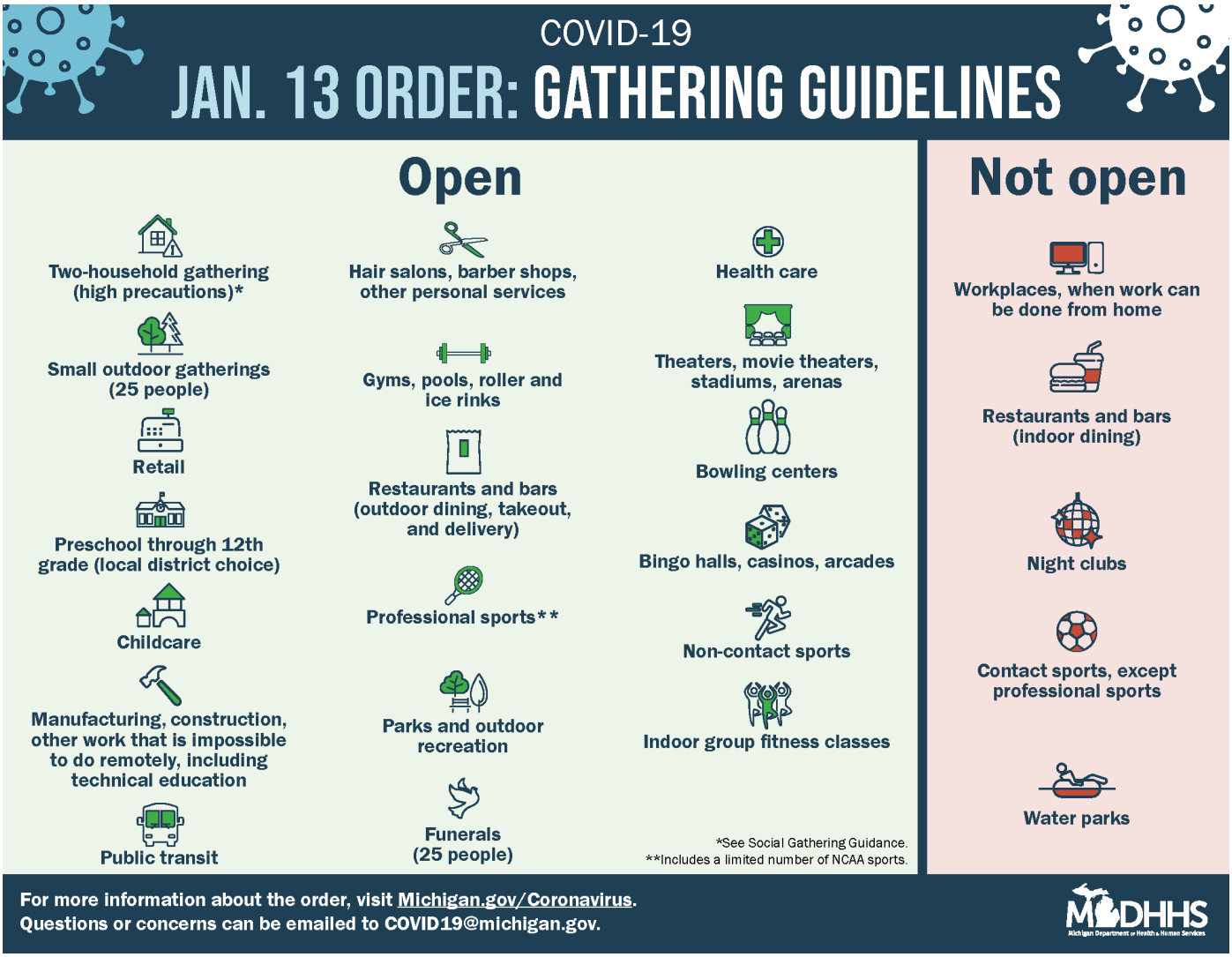
“We continue to make progress in our fight against this virus, and expanding vaccination to healthcare workers, long-term care residents and staff, some essential frontline workers and those age 65 and older is bringing us closer to ending the pandemic,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at MDHHS. “It is important that everyone continues to do their part by avoiding gatherings, wearing masks properly and social distancing. This remains just as important, even as the safe and effective vaccine is being administered, to protect those who are not yet able to be vaccinated.”

Previously, MDHHS had identified stabilization or declines in three metrics as critical for relaxing protocols. Although Michigan saw improvements across all three following the “pause” implemented in mid-November, some numbers have plateaued or begun to increase in recent days:

- Hospital capacity dedicated to COVID-19 patients has been in 13-day decline, with current capacity is at 12% for beds with COVID-19 patients. Peaked at 19.6% on Tuesday, Dec. 4.
- Overall case rates: increasing, currently at 266 cases per million. Peaked at 740 cases per million on Saturday, Nov. 14 and declined to a low of 239 on Friday, Dec. 25
- Positivity rate: plateauing; currently at 9.1% after reaching a low of 8.1% on Monday, Dec. 28 and increasing up to 10% since then.

“We are reopening cautiously because caution is working to save lives. The new order allows group exercise and non-contact sports, always with masks and social distancing, because in the winter it’s not as easy to get out and exercise and physical activity is important for physical and mental health,” said MDHHS Director Robert Gordon. “We are glad that we made it through the holidays without a big increase in numbers, but there are also worrying signs in the new numbers. We need to remain focused and continue to see declines in hospitalizations and to bring case rates and percent positivity down by doing what we know works.”

Indoor residential gatherings remain limited to 10 people and two households. MDHHS continues to urge families to avoid indoor gatherings or to pick a single other household to interact with consistent with guidance already released by the department. Families are encouraged to stay home as much as possible to maintain momentum and to protect loved ones. Families are also encouraged to Mask Up, Mask Right, using guidance for what masks to wear and how to wear them.




The epidemic order continues to temporarily pause indoor dining in bars and restaurants, but they can continue to offer outdoor dining, carry-out and delivery. The working plan is to open indoor dining with mitigation measures, capacity limits and a curfew on February 1, but the ultimate decision depends on data continuing to stabilize. Additional details on the reopening pathway are expected next week.

Colleges and universities can have students return to campus for the winter semester and restart in-person courses as of Jan. 18.

As before, employees who work in jobs that cannot be performed from home can continue to go to work, while employees who can work from home should continue to do so. Individualized activities with distancing and face masks are still allowed: retail shopping; public transit; restaurant takeout; and personal-care services such as haircuts, by appointment.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus. To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine.

Please see below for a one-pager on Michigan's vaccine distribution plan.

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Social Gathering Guidance
Jan. 13 Gatherings Order Infographic
Jan. 13 Capacity Limits Flyer
Safe Social Pods Guidance
Key Metrics Infographic
Outdoor Seating Guidance
Michigan's Vaccine Distribution Plan

## Coronavirus Disease 2019

## Online Services

Child Welfare Licensing Online Complaint Form
Report Welfare Fraud
Report WIC Fraud
MDHHS Policy Manuals
Child Support
MI Bridges: Apply for Assistance & Manage Your Account
Submit a FOIA Request
Birth, Death, Marriage, Divorce Certificates
E-license - Renew Health Professional License Online!
Medicaid Provider Manual
Verify Health Professional License
Prescription Drug & Opioid Abuse Prevention

## Join The Conversation

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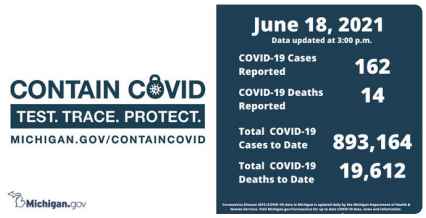
Stay Smart. Stay Safe. @MichiganHHS reports today, June 18, 2021, 162 new COVID-19 cases & 14 deaths. Michigan's total cases are now 893,164 & 19,612 deaths. Find the latest data & #COVID19 news at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus.

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