Mills Administration Continues Early Business Closing Time Amid Increase in COVID-19 Positivity Rate and Hospitalizations

December 30, 2020

Amid an increase in Maine's COVID-19 positivity rate and a continued high rate of hospitalizations, the Mills Administration today announced that it will extend the requirement for certain businesses statewide to close by 9:00 p.m. in order to limit activities that could contribute to the transmission of COVID-19.

The early closure limits extended indoor gatherings among members of the public, which are activities that present a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission, and does so during later hours when people are more likely to lower their guard, jeopardizing adherence to critical public health and safety measures. However, the early closure requirement also limits business disruption by allowing these businesses to maintain daytime operations and to continue curbside pick-up and delivery service after 9:00 p.m. The requirement, which was scheduled to expire on Sunday, January 3, 2021, will continue until further notice.

> *"With more people getting sick, going to the hospital, and dying from COVID-19 in Maine, it is clear we cannot afford to relax this rule now, especially as we wait to see the full impact of the holiday season on the rate of the virus transmission in our state,"* ***said Governor Mills.*** *"Maintaining an early closing time for businesses will keep them open for the majority of their operating hours while curbing late night gatherings where we are more likely to lower our guard. I encourage all Maine people who want to sustain their favorite small business through these winter months to continue to order take out or delivery which is still allowed after closing time."*

> *"The more we can do to limit transmission now, the more effective our ongoing vaccination effort will be,"* ***said Dr. Nirav D. Shah, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention****. "By limiting non-essential interactions, wearing masks in public, staying at least 6 feet apart, and washing hands frequently, we help keep the virus away from vulnerable people until they can be vaccinated."*

Checklists for Indoor Amusement; Outdoor Amusement; Movie Theaters; Performing Art Venues; Casinos and Seated Food and Drink Service have been updated to reflect the extension. All COVID-19 Prevention checklists can be viewed on the Department of Economic and Community Development's website.

Maine's COVID-19 positivity rate is 5.43 percent for PCR tests over the last 7 days, representing a significant increase over the prior 7-day period. There are 177 people currently hospitalized with the virus in Maine, including 48 in intensive care.

To help businesses impacted by the pandemic, the Mills Administration created the Maine Economic Recovery Grant Program and the Tourism, Hospitality, and Retail Recovery Program, awarding $235 million to 5,294 businesses and nonprofits across the state. These programs provide much-needed relief and an opportunity to keep businesses viable.

Credit

Copyright © 2021
All rights reserved.

Information

- Maine.gov
- Site Policies
- Accessibility
- Document Viewers
- Governor Janet T. Mills

Connect

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram

Contact

Governor Janet Mills
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-3531