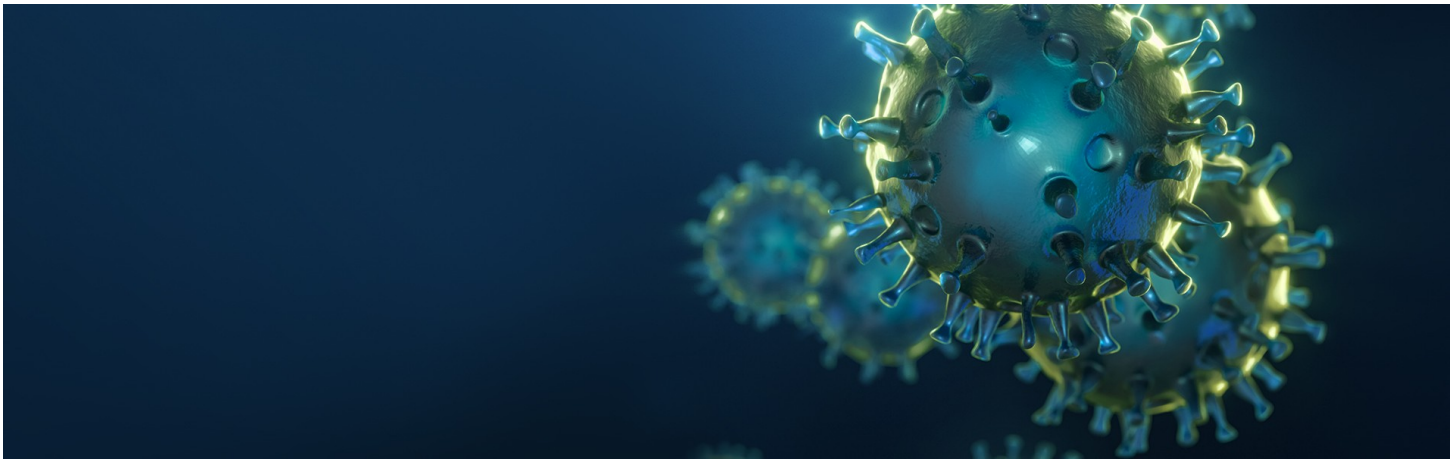
Governor DeWine Issues Statewide Mask Order, Travel Warning

July 22, 2020



(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted today provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

STATEWIDE MASK ORDER

Governor DeWine announced that beginning on Thursday, July 23, at 6:00 p.m., a statewide mask mandate will go into effect for citizens living in all 88 Ohio counties.

"Our preliminary data indicate that the rate of increase in new cases has slowed in the high-risk counties where masks are already mandated, so we are cautiously optimistic that things are heading in the right direction," said Governor DeWine. "We believe that requiring masks statewide will make a significant difference and will be key to making sure other counties do not progress to a higher level of increased spread."

All individuals in Ohio must wear facial coverings in public at all times when:

- At an indoor location that is not a residence

- Outdoors, but unable to maintain six-foot social distance from people who are not household members
- Waiting for, riding, driving, or operating public transportation, such as a taxi, a car service, or a private car used for ride-sharing.

The order only requires those 10 years old or older to wear a mask. Additional exclusions include:

- Those with a medical condition or a disability or those communicating with someone with a disability;
- Those who are actively exercising or playing sports;
- Those who are officiants at religious services;
- Those who are actively involved in public safety; or
- Those who are actively eating or drinking.

Schools should follow the guidance previously issued pertaining to masks.

STATEWIDE TRAVEL WARNING

Governor DeWine announced today a travel advisory for all individuals coming into Ohio from states reporting positive COVID-19 testing rates of 15 percent or higher.

Those traveling from one of the following states should self-quarantine for 14 days at home or in a hotel.

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Mississippi
- Nevada
- South Carolina
- Texas

The self-quarantine recommendation applies to those who live in Ohio and to people who are traveling into Ohio from any of these states.

"I know this will be hard and is a sacrifice, especially as summer vacations are in full force, but when we have a higher likelihood of being exposed, we should take precautions to limit the exposure of others," said Governor DeWine.

Ohio's positivity rate, which is an indicator of the percentage of people who have tested positive for COVID-19, has been around 6.2 percent.

Visit coronavirus.ohio.gov for tips on how to effectively quarantine.

INFORMAL GATHERINGS

Governor DeWine today urged citizens to use extreme caution when considering attending or hosting an informal gathering.

"We are seeing serious exposures to the virus that are arising from everyday events like church services, small house parties, neighborhood get-togethers, children's sleepovers, weddings, and even bridal showers," said Governor DeWine. "This virus is real, and we cannot let our guards down."

COUNTY FAIRS

Following a 19-case outbreak linked to a county fair in Ohio, Governor DeWine today spoke with fair managers from across Ohio to stress the importance of following safety guidance during county fair events.

"We've seen photos of packed grandstands and little social distancing," said Governor DeWine. "We want fairs to continue, but I expressed in the phone call today that fairs must follow the rules."

Guidance for fairs is available at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

CONGRESSIONAL LETTER

Lt. Governor Husted today announced that Governor DeWine has signed onto a letter to Congressional leadership with 20 other fellow Governors from across the nation, calling for reasonable limited liability protections for businesses, schools, healthcare workers, and governments as they are reopened during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The letter calls for predictable, timely, targeted liability protections to shield employers from legal risks associated with the spread of the novel coronavirus, so long as they are following the appropriate standards of care to protect their employees, customers, and students. The letter specifically requests that the protections be drawn in a narrow fashion as to not give license for gross negligence, misconduct, or recklessness.

Similar calls for liability protection have been made by Ohio's leading business organizations. In addition to Governor DeWine, the letter was co-signed by the Governors of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

DROPPING UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In the first press conference since Ohio's latest unemployment figures were released, Lt. Governor Husted also highlighted Ohio's strengthening economy as the state responsibly restarts in the midst of the pandemic. Ohio's unemployment rate dropped three percentage points in the last month to 10.9%. The Lt. Governor also highlighted how Ohio companies continue to go to great lengths to support their employees and customers.

HOSPITAL INDICATORS

Beginning with tomorrow's updated Ohio Public Health Advisory Systemmap, Governor DeWine announced that the ICU indicator will be enhanced to address concerns in the event ICU levels increase due to reasons other than COVID-19.

The indicator will trigger if ICU capacity for a county's hospital region exceeds 80 percent of normal capacity and if 20 percent of the normal ICU capacity is being used for COVID-19 positive patients.

"The 80 percent indicator is a good early warning to measure increasing utilization of ICU services, and this enhancement improves the indicator to ensure we are capturing developments in ICU utilization related to COVID-19 and changes from unrelated things," said Governor DeWine.

The Ohio Public Health Advisory System will also be updated in the coming weeks to include more localized testing data and an indicator related to known contacts spreading the virus when such local data is widely available.

NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation will sponsor two new public service announcements created in partnership with the Ohio Restaurant Association, OhioHealth, JobsOhio, and the Ohio Business Roundtable.

The first PSA features real Ohioans explaining why all Ohioans should all wear a mask.

The second PSA features Dr. Steve Markovich, a former Air National Guardsman and fighter pilot, who is CEO of OhioHealth. He encourages younger adults to wear masks to protect family, friends, and coworkers.

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

There are 78,742 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 3,235 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 9,864 people have been hospitalized, including 2,386 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language translation, can be viewed on the Ohio Channel's YouTube page.

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

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