Gov. Edwards Will Extend Stay at Home Order Until May 15 to Continue Flattening the Curve and Slowing the Spread of COVID-19

April 27, 2020

Everyone in Louisiana should wear masks when in public; Next announcement will be May 11

Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced he will extend Louisiana's Stay at Home order until May 15 to continue to slow the spread of COVID-19. Louisiana does not currently meet the White House criteria for entering Phase One of reopening.

While Louisiana has seen positive, improving trends statewide in terms of new case growth and new hospitalizations, in several regions across the state, new cases and hospitalizations continue to increase or to plateau, according to data from the Louisiana Department of Health. The White House criteria calls for declining numbers of new cases and hospitalizations, among other things.

"Thanks to the commitment of the people of Louisiana, our state has made progress in flattening the curve and reducing the spread of the novel coronavirus. Unfortunately, we still have a little work to do before we meet the criteria to safely move to the next phase of reopening, so I will extend the state's Stay at Home order until May 15, with a few minor changes," Gov. Edwards said. "While this is not the announcement I want to make, I am hopeful, and all of Louisiana should be hopeful, that we will enter into the next phase of reopening soon, in mid-May. I am anxious to get all areas of our economy reopened, but if we accelerate too quickly, we may have to slam on the brakes. That will be bad for public health and for businesses, bad for our people and bad for our state."

Gov. Edwards' decision is based on regional data that shows that while overall new cases and hospitalizations have decreased, this is not the case in several regions. In the Baton Rouge and Monroe regions, both new cases and new hospitalizations have increased. Some increases are also being seen in terms of new cases in Acadiana and a plateau for hospitalizations in Southwest Louisiana and a plateau of new cases on the Northshore.

- Click here (/assets/Graphics/caronavirus/govCV19Brief-4-27-20.pdf)to view the Governor's presentation on regional data trends.

Under the extended order, which will be issued on Friday, May 1, businesses that previously were directed to be closed will remain closed, including salons, barber shops, bars and casinos, among other things. Businesses that are deemed essential under the third phase of federal CISA guidance may still be open. Non-essential retail businesses in Louisiana continue to be able to open with fewer than 10 people total inside.

Three major changes in the new Stay at Home order include:

- Malls will remain closed to the public, but stores may open for curbside delivery.
- Restaurants will be allowed to open their outside areas for patrons to eat meals only, without tableside service.
- All employees of a business who have contact with the public must wear a mask.

Additionally, both the CDC and the Louisiana Department of Health strongly urge everyone to wear masks when in public.

"Wearing cloth masks or protective face coverings is part of the new normal," Gov. Edwards said. "Wearing a mask is being a good neighbor and in Louisiana, we pride ourselves on being good neighbors. Your mask protects me and other people and my mask protects you."

Hopefully, Louisiana will meet the White House criteria and move to Phase 1 on May 15, provided symptoms, new case counts and hospitalizations decrease and the state continues to surge testing and contact tracing capacity. Phase 1 lifts the Stay at Home order and eases restrictions on some public spaces like houses of worship and restaurants and opens other businesses that have been closed such as barber shops and salons, but with restrictions on occupancy and strict requirements for personal distancing and masks to keep everyone safe. Phase One occupancy for these businesses will be limited to 25 percent.

As Louisiana prepares for its next phase of reopening, business owners and faith leaders are encouraged to plan as well, including understanding their building's maximum occupancy limits, which may require contacting local government or the State Fire Marshal's office. They should also plan on ensuring their employees have masks.

Gov. Edwards intends to make his next announcement on moving to Phase 1 in Louisiana on or by May 11. Members of the public can continue to get information from the Governor's office on coronavirus.la.gov (https://coronavirus.la.gov/) and by texting LACOVID to 67283.

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