Mills Administration Accelerates Start Date for Lodging Establishments to Serve Out-of-State Visitors

June 12, 2020

The Mills Administration announced today that it has accelerated the first day that lodging establishments in Maine can begin serving out-of-state visitors who meet either the 14-day quarantine requirement or the State's new testing alternative. Lodging establishments may now begin serving these individuals on Friday, June 26 rather than Wednesday, July 1 (Stage 3). Accelerating the start date will help lodging establishments safely serve visitors during a key weekend of Maine's tourism season leading up to the July 4th holiday.

This update does not change any other start dates associated with Stage 3, which is scheduled to begin July 1. Per the Administration's announcement on Monday, residents of New Hampshire and Vermont, who are exempt from Maine's 14-day quarantine requirement and testing alternative, may stay at Maine lodging establishments beginning today.

"We continue to move to safely reopen Maine's economy," **says Heather Johnson, Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development.** "Maine looks forward to safely welcoming out of state visitors to enjoy all that Maine has to offer during the 4th of July Holiday."

Further, the Department of Economic and Community Development posted additional Stage 2 and Stage 3 COVID-19 Prevention Checklists for businesses and activities. In response to feedback from businesses and public health experts, the Department has also updated guidance for some businesses that are already open. The checklists, written in close collaboration with industry leaders and public health experts, outline health and safety guidance that businesses and activities must commit to comply with in order to reopen.

Additional Stage 3 Checklists

1. Massage Facilities

Updated Checklists:

Stage 1

- Barbering and Cosmetology – Hair
- Dog Grooming
- Drive-in Theaters
- Golf Courses and Disc Golf Courses
- Religious Gatherings

Stage 2

- Lodging
- Campgrounds/RV Parks
- Day Camps and Summer Recreation
- Museums
- Barbering and Cosmetology - Nails
- Tanning Salons

Stage 3

- Tattoo, Body Piercing, Electrolysis, and Micropigmentation Establishments
- Overnight Summer Camps

The Mills Administration earlier this week unveiled an alternative to the State's 14-day quarantine requirement for people entering Maine. The multilayered plan, called *Keep Maine Healthy,* aims to protect the health of Maine people and visitors while allowing the opportunity for people to visit Maine and support Maine small businesses during the summer months.

The plan rests on three cornerstones: 1) having visitors certify that they have received a recent negative COVID-19 test to stay in lodging establishments, such as hotels, as an alternative to quarantine; 2) increasing symptom checks at places where visitors tend to go; and 3) supporting community promotion of COVID-19 prevention best practices and public health education.

In addition to the prevention measures, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services announced earlier this week a new standing order and significantly expanded testing for people throughout Maine that will support employees of Maine's tourism industry. Lodging and customer service employees are the core of the Maine tourism experience, and this expanded testing will ensure they have access to testing to protect themselves, their families, and the people at their hotels or other hospitality sites.

This alternative comes as testing capacity in states continues to expand and testing restrictions continue to be relax. According to the National Governors Association, more than half of states no longer limit testing to people with symptoms or to a close contact who has COVID-19 while more than a dozen states allow anyone to be tested.

While air travel has significantly decreased due to COVID-19, most summer visitors come to Maine by car. The States of Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey – from which Maine receives nearly half of its summer visitors – have performed testing at a level equal to 10 to 14 percent of their populations cumulatively.

Additionally, new tests continue to be developed, which will help expand the number of people coming to Maine who can "know before you go."

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