COVID-19 Vaccine (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp) – Find out when, where, and how to get your shot.

Vaccine Rewards (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine-rewards/index.jsp) – Your shot to a safe summer. Claim your reward by June 30.

Newsroom

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Governor Walz Announces Four-Week Dial Back to Control Spread of COVID-19

New guidance pauses in-person social gatherings, dining, sports, fitness centers; Retail, salons, places of worship, other activities may continue to operate under current restrictions

November 18, 2020

[ST. PAUL, MN] – As the spread of COVID-19 skyrockets across the state and hospitals voice concern about ability to treat those who fall ill, Governor Tim Walz today announced new actions to help control the spread of the virus. Turning the dial back, Governor Walz announced a four-week pause on social activities, in-person dining, sports, and fitness establishments.

"Today marks a somber milestone in the pandemic as we surpass 3,000 Minnesotans lost to COVID-19," Governor Walz said. **"This immense loss strikes at the heart of our state. We are at a breaking point. As hospitals near the crisis of turning away new patients, continuing as things are is simply not sustainable. The actions announced today will help prevent more families from losing a loved one and ensure our hospitals can treat those who fall ill. While these actions mean incredible hardship for many, they are the fastest way to recover our economy, keep our kids in school, and get back to the activities we love."**

Throughout the pandemic, Governor Walz has followed the data. Now the data is moving rapidly, and today's actions follow suit. Last week, Governor Walz explained that public health measures are targeting *who*, *when*, and *where* the virus is spreading. With community spread at an all-time high, the *who* is all of us; the *when* is all of the time; and today's actions focus on the *where*. The scientific research and public health data indicate that the virus is spread most in places where people gather for long periods of time, especially when masks are not consistently worn. For instance, a quick stop at a retail store with a mask and social distancing appears to be lower risk than a gathering of friends for dinner where guests are likely to be seated closer together and unmasked while eating or drinking—whether it's at a restaurant or in their own home.

Beginning Friday, November 20, at 11:59pm and lasting until Friday, December 18, in-person social gatherings with individuals outside your household are prohibited; bars and restaurants are dialed back to take-out and delivery service only; gyms, fitness studios, entertainment venues, event spaces, and similar establishments will need to close; and adult and youth sports are paused. Retail businesses, salons, and places of worship may continue to operate with proper precautions in place. Childcare remains open. Schools will continue to operate under the Safe Learning Plan, which shifts between in-person, distance, and hybrid learning depending on the local conditions of the virus. All other current restrictions also remain in effect.

"I know the upcoming holidays make it incredibly difficult to stay home and stay apart, but this is how we keep the people we love safe and healthy," said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. **"Take it from me, no celebration is worth an empty seat that will never be filled. This dial back will help us do everything we can to make sure our tables are full next year."**

The pandemic has reached a concerning and dangerous phase throughout much of the Midwest this November. It took 29 weeks to reach 100,000 infections in Minnesota, and just six weeks after that to reach 200,000. Sometime next week, less than three weeks after reaching 200,000 infections, Minnesota will reach 300,000 infections.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Governor asked Minnesotans to help slow the spread of the virus as hospitals built up capacity to ensure they could care for everyone who falls ill. That extra capacity is now being put to the test as the virus spreads quickly across the state, region, and country. More people are getting sick, including our health care workers, which is impacting hospitals' ability to provide care even when there are enough actual hospital beds. This has put our hospitals on the verge of dangerous capacity shortages with some hospitals already reporting turning away new patients.

"Every day brings us closer to having safe and effective vaccines, but we must take action now to slow down the rate at which COVID-19 is spreading in all corners of our state," Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said **. "Our health care workers continue to work hard to provide care but we can't afford to overwhelm them. Every Minnesotan needs to understand that they have a key role to play here. That means staying home and avoiding close contact with those outside your household. It means wearing a mask when you do need to go out in public. It means staying home when you're not feeling well. It means getting tested when appropriate and isolating until you get the test results."**

To support small businesses that are struggling as they do their part to combat the spread of COVID-19, last week Governor Walz announced an additional $10 million in Small Business Relief Grants. This funding will support an additional 1,000 businesses that have applied for the grant program. It supplements hundreds of millions of dollars in small business support that Minnesota has allocated since the beginning of the pandemic. With options at the state-level severely limited moving forward, the Governor is pushing the federal government for additional support. Minnesotans with questions about unemployment insurance are encouraged to visit uimn.org (https://www.uimn.org/).

"Minnesota business leaders have been doing everything they can to keep businesses and workplaces safe as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, yet we're in a precarious position that's now more urgent than ever before," said Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Steve Grove. **"That's why we must collectively take action to slow the spread of the virus – the health and well-being of Minnesotans, and our state's jobs and economy, depend on it."**

"To all Minnesotans who are struggling to get by, I know this pandemic is devastating," Governor Walz said. **"This pandemic is not fair. We need federal support to help keep our businesses afloat, our workers paid, and our families with food on the table. I will continue to fight with every fiber of my being for that support that you need and deserve."**

Executive Order 20-99 will have the full force and effect of law upon the approval of the Executive Council, which is made up of Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan, Attorney General Keith Ellison, Secretary of State Steve Simon, and State Auditor Julie Blaha.

More information on these restrictions and the state response is available here (https://staysafe.mn.gov/).

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