State Public Health Officials Announce Region 7 to Return to Phase 4 of Restore Illinois

Press Release - Friday, September 18, 2020

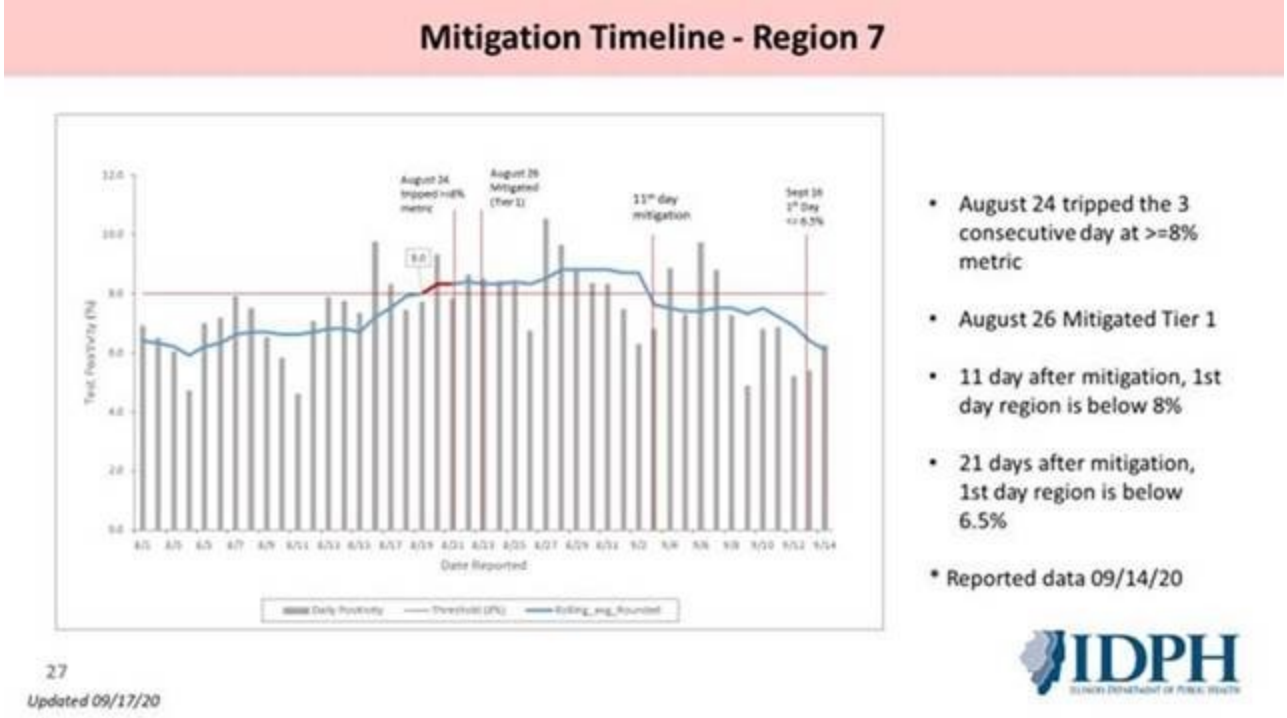
JOLIET - Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) are announcing that Region 7, which includes the greater Will and Kankakee County areas, will return to Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan today, September 18, 2020 at 5 p.m. This announcement follows weeks of close coordination between IDPH and local health departments, as well as a concerted effort by community leaders and residents to follow the additional mitigation measures implemented on August 26, 2020.

Region 7 moved to stricter mitigations following three consecutive days of a rolling positivity rate above 8 percent. As of today, Region 7 has reached the threshold to lift mitigations of three consecutive days of a rolling positivity rate below 6.5 percent, with today's rate at 5.6 percent. This means that as of 5 p.m. today, indoor dining and bar service can resume along with larger gathering sizes as outlined in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan.

"Today, Region 7 - Will and Kankakee Counties - will return to the standard Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan because residents chose to be all in for each other, for their small businesses, for their bars and restaurants, for their kids, for their neighbors," **said Governor JB Pritzker.** "Let that be a testament to the power of a community that embraces doctor-recommended mitigations proven to reduce risk and slow the spread. We can't outrun this virus, but with the tools we know to work - masks, distancing, handwashing, and respect for public health and each other - we can beat it back enough to keep our businesses open and our neighborhoods safer all at once. Don't let up now, Region 7 - let's keep this success going."

"I want to commend and thank those in Region 7 for working together to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in their communities," **said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike.** "Moving from a greater than 8 percent rolling positivity rate to below 6.5 percent in a matter of weeks demonstrates how concerted efforts to reduce exposure risks through limiting large gatherings, increased masking and other mitigation measures can truly make a difference. It also shows how quickly the positivity rate can move, in either direction. Because of the speed in which the rate can change, we must continue to wear our masks, watch our distance, and follow the guidance in Phase 4 of Restore Illinois. It will take all of us working together to get through this."

Over the last few weeks, IDPH has worked closely with elected officials and community leaders in Region 7 to slow the spread of COVID-19 and bring down the number of positive cases in the area, helping bring the region from a rolling positivity rate above 8 percent to 5.6 percent. IDPH will continue working closely with the region to ensure residents continue to follow the mitigations that remain in place and wear face covering to will help prevent another spike in cases.



IDPH continues to monitor each region in the state for several key indicators to identify early, but significant increases of COVID-19 transmission in Illinois, potentially signifying resurgence. These indicators can be used to determine whether additional community mitigation interventions are needed to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

Additional measures will be implemented if a region experiences an increase in COVID-19 test positivity with a simultaneous decrease in hospital capacity or increase in hospital admissions for COVID-like-illness, or if the 7-day rolling positivity rate is above 8 percent for three consecutive days.

Region 4, the Metro East region, which is currently operating under additional mitigations, continues to report a 7-day rolling positivity rate above 8 percent. Additional mitigations can be found online **here**.

A full list of mitigation measures pertaining to certain businesses and industries may be found on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) website at **www.dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois**.

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