Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §20-7-109—110. Based on available scientific evidence, it is necessary and appropriate to take further action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that residents and visitors in Arkansas remain safe.

K-12 SCHOOLS remain closed for on-site instruction an additional three (3) weeks

According to "The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America: 15 Days to Slow the Spread," school operations can accelerate the spread of the coronavirus. States with evidence of community transmission should close schools in affected and surrounding areas. States and localities that close schools need to address childcare needs of critical responders, as well as the nutritional needs of children.

According to CDC Recommendations on school closure, in places where school closures are necessary, the anticipated academic and economic impacts and unintended impacts on disease outcomes must be planned for and mitigated. Provision of academic support (e.g., tele-ed), alternatives for school-based meals as well as other services (e.g., behavioral and mental health services) for economically and physically vulnerable children, support for families for whom telework and paid sick leave is not available, ensuring that high risk individuals continue to be protected must all be addressed. Special consideration must be given for health care workers so that school closures do not impact their ability to work.

K-12 schools and extracurricular activities, including athletic events and practices, will remain closed for on-site instruction an additional 3 weeks (until April 17) and then re-evaluated based upon the public health conditions. Education will continue through alternative methods of instruction.

STATE GOVERNMENT-

Remote work, telecommuting, video conferencing, and necessary personnel

State government employees will conduct business through both remote work and on-site work. On-site government work will be limited to employees that are critical to the necessary function of government during a public health emergency and are required to report to work on site.

Broad discretion will be given to secretaries to determine what personnel are critical for the necessary functioning of their Department.

The ability to work remotely or the requirement to report to work on-site will depend on the nature of the critical duties of the employee and will be determined by the Secretary of the employee's Department.

Employees with job duties that are not critical in nature to the necessary functions of government and cannot be performed remotely as determined by the Secretary of their Department will receive Director's Authorized Leave for a period of time to be determined by the Governor. If an employee who is necessary for the critical function of government or an employee that is able to work remotely becomes sick or is quarantined due to COVID-19, then he or she will receive paid Director's Authorized Leave for the duration of the illness or quarantine. Otherwise, regular pay and leave is available. Employees in Director's Authorized Leave status will be available for other assignments for the necessary functioning of government.

HOSPITALS, CLINICS & MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES

In order for all hospitals, clinics and mental health facilities to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases including COVID-19 within the facility, all hospitals shall conduct mandatory temperature and COVID-19 symptom screening of staff and visitors.

Other measures should include posting signs at entrances with instructions to individuals with symptoms of respiratory infection to immediately put on a mask and keep it on during their assessment, cover their mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing, use and dispose of tissues, and perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions. Triage areas should have signs advising patients with fever or symptoms of respiratory infection to immediately notify triage personnel so appropriate precautions can be put in place.

Suggested Screening Criteria for Employees and Visitors to Hospitals:
- Have you had a fever of 100.4°F or greater?
- Do you have cough or shortness of breath?
- Do you have other symptoms that seem like flu or pneumonia?
- Have you traveled out of state or out of the country in the last 14 days? Where did you travel?
- In the last 14 days, have you had contact with anyone who has had lab-confirmed COVID-19?

Hospitals may choose to require individuals meeting the criteria to wear masks or other personal protective equipment, or to limit access to some or all sections of the hospital.

BARS, RESTAURANTS Close Dine-In

It is believed that there is low risk of spread through food. However, due to the close contact that occurs between customers and staff at a bar, club, or retail food establishment, dine-in opportunities are closed until further notice but are allowed to remain open for carry-out, drive through and delivery. Those licensed by the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) for the retail sale of alcoholic beverages may sell corked or sealed bottles of wine and sealed bottles and cans of beer to go with the purchase of food. For additional information on alcohol sales and delivery, refer to the guidance issued by ABC at

https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/news/details/emergency-rule-changes-regarding-the-sale-of-alcoholic-beverages.

The Department of Health (ADH) recommends excluding any employee who has a fever and cough. If any employee tests positive for COVID-19, ADH recommends that the employee be excluded from working in the facility until they are symptom-free and have been cleared to return to work by their primary care physician and ADH. After such action, ADH also recommends that the establishment close temporarily to clean and sanitize all surfaces.

GYMS AND INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT VENUES Closed

Due to the close contact that occurs among customers and staff and recent recommendations of avoiding social gatherings of more than ten (10) people, gyms (including fitness centers/clubs, fitness classes, and group fitness studios) and indoor entertainment venues, such as bowling alleys, trampoline parks, and indoor amusement centers, are closed to nonessential functions until further notice.