



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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Updated MDHHS orders expand restaurant capacity, increase gathering and capacity limits, allow for expanded visitation at residential care facilities

LANSING, Mich. – Today, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) updated two of its epidemic orders, allowing for increased capacity limits at various venues, larger residential and nonresidential gatherings and expanded visitation opportunities at residential care facilities. Changes are designed to balance reopening while controlling the spread of COVID-19 and save Michiganders' lives. Although progress has been made in reduction of hospitalizations, it is crucial that Michiganders continue to mask up and socially distance as we reopen.

“As we continue our vaccine rollout and make steady progress against the virus, we are taking additional incremental steps to re-engage to ensure we are protecting our families and frontline workers and saving lives,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “Michigan is a national leader in the fight against COVID-19, and our fact-based, data-driven approach will help our state rebuild our economy and resume normal day-to-day activities. As always, mask up, maintain social distancing, and wash your hands. We all have a personal responsibility to slow the spread of the virus so we can end this pandemic together. One of the most important things Michiganders can do is make a plan to get the safe and effective vaccine when it's available to you.”

“More than 2 million doses of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine have been administered and a third vaccine will soon be arriving here in Michigan to help us end the pandemic in our state,” said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. “We continue to monitor the data closely, and based on current trends we are taking another step toward normalcy. We urge Michiganders to continue doing what works and wearing a mask, washing their hands and avoiding crowds.”

MDHHS had been closely monitoring [three metrics](#) for stabilization or declines over the past several weeks. As with other states, Michigan's metrics are mixed. The presence of more infectious variants, such as the B.1.1.7 variant, threatens our progress in control of the epidemic and MDHHS will be monitoring data closely. In recent days:

- Hospital capacity dedicated to COVID-19 is now at 3.9%. This metric peaked at 19.6% on Tuesday, Dec. 4.
- Overall case rates: After declining for six weeks, this metric is plateauing at 91.2 cases per million. The rate is similar to what we were at the beginning of October.
- Positivity rate: is now at 3.7% having increased slightly from last week (3.5%). This metric is similar to where we were at the beginning of October.

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With all residents at skilled nursing homes having been offered their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and a vast majority having had their second dose, the [Residential Care Facilities Order](#) goes into effect immediately. The order encourages communal dining and group activities for residents and allows indoor and outdoor visitation in all counties regardless of county risk level. Visitation is allowed as long as the facility has not had a new COVID-19 case in the last 14 days and all indoor visitors ages 13 and older are subject to rapid antigen testing. Testing will help keep residents, staff and families safe while allowing for visitation and an increased quality of life for residents. Adult foster care homes licensed for 12 or fewer residents, hospice facilities, substance use disorder residential facilities and assisted-living facilities are encouraged to implement visitor and staff testing protocols.

Visitors will be required to wear face masks or other personal protective equipment when required by the facility at all times. In general, visitors will need to maintain six feet from residents.

“While we continue to have virus very present across the entire state, our improvements in case numbers, test positivity, and vaccinations mean we can move forward with reopening in an incremental way,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “I am glad we continue to make progress, but that progress is fragile. Everyone should continue to do important things like wearing a mask, washing hands, avoiding large gatherings and getting one of the three safe and effective vaccines when it becomes available to you.”

Changes to the [Gatherings and Mask Order](#) go into effect Friday, March 5, and remain in effect through Monday, April 19.

Capacity changes include:

- Restaurants and bars are allowed to be at 50% capacity up to 100 people. Tables must be six feet apart with no more than six people per table. There is now an 11 p.m. curfew.
- Indoor non-residential gatherings where people interact across households are permitted up to 25 people, allowing public meetings and other small indoor gatherings to resume.
- Outdoor non-residential gatherings where people interact across households are permitted up to 300, allowing larger outdoor events to resume.
- Indoor entertainment venues are allowed to be at 50% capacity, up to 300 people.
- Exercise facilities are allowed to be at 30% capacity with restrictions on distancing and mask requirements.
- Retail is allowed to be at 50% capacity.
- Casinos are allowed to be at 30% capacity.
- Indoor stadiums and arenas are allowed have 375 if seating capacity is under 10,000; 750 if seating capacity is over 10,000.
- Outdoor entertainment and recreational facilities may host up to 1,000 patrons.

Indoor residential gatherings are now limited to 15 people from three households, while outdoor residential gatherings can include up to 50 people.

The epidemic order continues to temporarily pause other venues and activities where participants have close physical contacts and are not consistently masked, like water parks. As before, employees who work in jobs that cannot be performed from home can continue to go to work, while employees who can work from home should continue to do so.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus). To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](https://www.michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine).

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[March 5 Gatherings Order Infographic](#)
[Social Gathering Guidance](#)
[Capacity Limits Fact Sheet](#)
[Outdoor Seating Infographic](#)

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[Residential Care Visitation Order Infographic](#)
[Visitation Order Special Cases](#)
[Key Metrics Infographic](#)