



Pettis County

HEALTH CENTER

May 29, 2020

Press Release Update on Public Health Order

In consultation with the leadership of Pettis County, the decision has been made to allow the current Pettis County Health Order to expire and adopt the State Public Health Order which was extended by Governor Parsons on May 28, 2020. The State Public Health Order removes the limited additional restrictions remaining in place under the Pettis County Health Order.

The following changes are noted:

1. Restaurants no longer have an occupancy limit. However, restaurants must continue to maintain 6 feet around all tables. This will allow approximately 50% occupancy for most restaurants. In those situations where the 6 feet distance can not be maintained, such as when serving food, the use of other protective measures such as masks must continue to be used. Enhanced cleaning is also required and common touch areas must receive special attention.
2. Events such as sports, weddings, funerals, church services and other social gatherings may continue as long as the 6 feet distance is maintained between household groups.
3. Other situations that bring individuals in close contact with each other still require enhanced protective measures, which include wearing of masks when social distancing can not be maintained.

Occupancy limitations remain on retail establishments as per the State Public Health Order.

This change does not remove responsibility for businesses and organization to maintain the standards outlined in the order. In the event that a case of COVID-19 is identified in an individual who has attended a given facility where appropriate standards have not been maintained, that facility will be notified to contact all those who may have been in contact with the case and the public will be notified as needed.

The goal of the administrator of the Pettis County Health Center and the Board of Trustees has always been to maintain the balance between protecting the health of the community while allowing businesses to operate within the parameters of State Public Health orders. As noted in all of the State Public Health orders, local situations are to be considered in the drafting of local public health orders. Unfortunately, Pettis County has experienced more cases than many of

our surrounding counties and adjustments to protect the well being of the county had to be made. Nothing was done in isolation, but rather in consultation with the leadership of the city and county and the Board of Trustees as well as following the State Public Health order. Under the laws of the State of Missouri, protection of the health of the public during times of communicable disease outbreak is the responsibility of the state and local public health authorities. Those decisions ultimately are the responsibility of the administrator of the local public health authority. Failure to protect the health of the county residents is a crime. The law does not make consideration of economic consequences. Therefore, the administrator of the local public health authority, Pettis County Health Center, had to make those very difficult decisions and prepare the local public health order. Nothing was ever done with the intention of causing a small business to close or as a power grab. There has been a great deal of misinformation about this process circulating in the community.

All businesses were and still are required to operate with limitations and some businesses can not operate safely with the social distancing or occupancy limitations. Most of those limitations came from the State Public Health Order and could not be modified. No business in Pettis County was ever designated as non-essential. Decisions regarding closure of a business were made based upon a variety of factors. Each organization makes decisions on how to protect their employees, visitors, clients and customers.

For the foreseeable future, social distancing, masks, staying home if you are ill, good handwashing, and protecting the vulnerable among us will continue. We want to have the opportunity to enjoy the summer activities without seeing an increase in cases that would require a return to increased restrictions. Everyone needs to participate in following protective activities, using reliable sources of information to make decisions and being supportive of those who do not yet feel comfortable returning to public life.

For additional information, contact the Pettis County Health Center at 660-827-1130.

Attachment: Public Health Update