



Monroe County Health Department

Monroe County, Indiana

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MONROE COUNTY LOOSENING SOME COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS SAYS MOVING FORWARD REQUIRES EVERYONE TO DO THEIR PART

BLOOMINGTON: The Monroe County Health Officer, Dr. Thomas Sharp and Monroe County Health Department (MCHD) issued a new health order to go into effect 5/16/20, replacing the former Stay-At-Home order.

According to the order, Monroe County residents will follow the Stage II requirements of the Governor Holcomb's Back on Track Plan Indiana, except for several adaptations made for Monroe County. "We are continually looking at data and gathering information and are carefully moving forward," says Dr. Sharp.

One of the adaptations is the timeline: Monroe County will remain in Stage II through May 31, 2020. "This will give us time to collect data and watch for changes," says Penny Caudill, MCHD administrator.

Other local adaptations include:

- Dining Services can open immediately at 50% capacity
- Personal Services businesses can open immediately within the guidelines
- Places of worship are strongly encouraged not to have interior gatherings until June 1, 2020
- Each government entity can determine its own policies regarding building openings and staff as long as it doesn't conflict with Indiana Executive Orders
- Strongly recommending teleworking with possible

As part of Stage 2, all businesses must have a COVID-19 prevention plan in place before opening and mass gatherings are limited to 25 people or less.

The health officer and health department continues to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, including the gating criteria recommended for reopening. This includes a 14-day period of downward trends of COVID-19 cases and similar illnesses as well as hospital capacity for COVID-19 cases and testing health care workers. They also continue to work closely with local government officials, health leaders and business partners to gather and share information.



“Although it is easy to focus on quantitative data like the decrease in Covid-like and flu-like illnesses, the percentage of positive tests and ICU and ventilator capacity, we also have to include qualitative information like enhanced contact tracing, additional testing capacity and reports from community business partners and others in making decisions,” says Caudill. Monroe County will soon get additional testing capacity through OptumServe. The clinic was expected to open this week but is delayed due to unforeseen location challenges.

Dr. Sharp feels that everyone has a part to play on how reopening will affect the community.

“Everything going forward depends on how people behave,” says Sharp. “This will not work unless businesses and individuals do their part” to follow the health order. The department is also starting an “I Pledge” campaign to encourage people to commit to following 5 COVID-19 prevention steps:

- I will maintain 6 feet of social distance
- I will wash my hands often for at least 20 seconds
- I will wear a face covering or mask when in public
- I will stay home when I am sick
- I will get tested immediately if I have symptoms

For more detailed information on the Governor’s Back on Track Indiana Plan, visit <https://backontrack.in.gov/>

For more information, visit the Monroe County Health Department webpage at www.co.monroe.in.us/HealthDepartment.

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