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State to implement additional mitigation measures in suburban Cook County

FOREST PARK- Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) today confirmed new mitigation measures issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) for public areas in suburban Cook County, including restaurants, retail establishments and other settings. The measures will go into effect Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 12:01 a.m.

Increasing positivity rates and hospitalizations triggered the Illinois Department of Public Health to move Region 10 from a designation of blue to orange, indicating warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk, per the [Restore Illinois Resurgence Mitigations](#) Plan, which uses a standardized approach to monitor the state as a whole, while also monitoring regional trends.

“We have seen eight days of increases in test positivity and hospital admissions,” said CCDPH Co-Lead and Senior Medical Officer Dr. Rachel Rubin. “The positivity rate is now 7.7%, up from 7.2% last week. Metrics like these prompted the state to mandate Tier 1 Resurgence Mitigations, similar to other counties with increased transmission.”

“Yesterday the state reported over 4,000 new cases of COVID-19 in a 24-hour period. The numbers are very concerning and a wake-up call as we head into colder weather, flu season and the holidays,” said President Preckwinkle. “We are all experiencing COVID fatigue, but we must remain vigilant and continue practicing the commonsense strategies that have been proven to slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.”

“Our mitigation measures are responsive to the data, which is showing higher rates among people under age 30,” said Dr. Rubin. “Everyone is at risk, including young people. While they tend not to get as sick from COVID-19, they can still become seriously ill and spread the infection to their grandparents, co-workers, family, and friends.”

Recent studies have shown when people gather indoors to drink and eat at parties, bars, or restaurants they are more likely to become lax in following physical distancing and masking guidelines.

“And taking the party home isn’t necessarily safer,” said Cook County Department of Public Health Co-Lead and Senior Medical Officer Dr. Kiran Joshi. “People are exposed to the virus and are bringing it home to their families and friends. As tempting as it may be to celebrate Halloween with friends, even small gatherings pose significant risk – especially for loved ones who may be more vulnerable to serious illness.”

CCDPH serves all of suburban Cook County, excluding Evanston, Oak Park, Skokie and Stickney Township, which have their own state-certified health departments. Together, these five health departments comprise Region 10.

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Suburban Cook County Mitigations

The following mitigations have been issued by IDPH and will be enforceable by CCDPH and law enforcement:

Bars and restaurants:

- All bars and restaurants close at 11pm and may reopen no earlier than 6am the following day
- No indoor service
- All bar and restaurant patrons should be seated at tables outside
- No ordering, seating, or congregating at bar (bar stools should be removed)
- Tables should be 6 feet apart
- No standing or congregating indoors or outdoors while waiting for a table or exiting
- No dancing or standing indoors
- Reservations required for each party
- No seating of multiple parties at one table

Meetings, social events and gatherings:

- Limit to lesser of 25 guests or 25% of overall room capacity both indoors and outdoors
- No party buses
- Gaming and Casinos close at 11:00pm, are limited to 25 percent capacity, and follow mitigations for bars and restaurants, if applicable

Offices

- Continued emphasis on telework for as many workers as possible

Organized group recreational activities & gyms (fitness centers, sports, etc.)

- All sports guidance effective Aug 15, 2020 remains in effect
- Outdoor activities (not included in the above exposure settings) continue per current state guidance.

In addition to the required mitigations above, CCDPH reminds residents of the **Continued Mitigation Strategies** that were recommended by the department on August 3:

- Restaurant and bar maximum party size of 6 people per table outdoors.
- Indoor fitness class maximum class size of 10.
- No personal services that require removal of face coverings (e.g. facials and shaves).
- Residential property managers are asked to limit guest entry to 6 people per unit.
- Self-quarantine based on travel guidance to states with high rates of community transmission.

For more information, visit the [Cook County ShinyApp](#) for CCDPH data, and the [IDPH Regional COVID Resurgence Criteria webpage](#) for Region 10 data. For the most frequently asked questions by businesses regarding Phase 4 guidelines and the mitigation measures, visit the [Illinois Department of Commerce of Economic Opportunity \(DCEO\) website](#).

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