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A Brief Summary of the Ohio Department of Health Director's "Stay-At-Home" Order

Below is a brief explanation of the relevant sections of the Ohio Department of Health Director's "Stay-at-Home" Order related to businesses:

Para 1 requires all Ohio residents to remain home unless otherwise exempted by this order. This means that unless they are leaving their home/travelling in accord with Para 14, they are to remain at home. This means no casual shopping. Only necessities.

Para 2 requires all non-essential businesses and operations to cease. Para 12 gives the list of what is deemed essential by the State of Ohio.

Para 3 prohibits gatherings of more than 10 individuals, unless otherwise exempted by this order. This paragraph lists several types of activities that are to cease under this order

Para 5, sec d allows people to leave their homes for "essential" work:

- for health and safety (eg—doctor's appts, vet care, emergency services, etc)
- for necessary supplies and services
- for outdoor activity. This order is encouraging walking, hiking, running or biking.
- for certain types of work (ie—essential businesses and operations)
- to take care of others (elderly, relatives, etc)

Para 6 encourages the elderly and those who may be vulnerable as a result of illness to remain at home.

Para 12 gives a listing of what constitutes an "Essential Business or Operation." 25 categories of businesses are listed.

Para 13 requires that, to the extent possible, employers must implement social distancing requirements, as outlined in Para 15. All facilities are to comply with the distance requirements to the extent possible that they can. In some instances, this will not be possible. Many facilities, due to age of the facility, the construction, permanently-fixed pieces of equipment, or layout simply cannot comply with a 6 ft spacing. However, the order does give such facilities the right to operate, as best they can.

Changes MUST be made where possible. In some cases this will mean “business as usual” cannot continue. In its place, it will mean “business as modified” by complying with the provisions of this order as much as is possible. The modifications may not be perfect, but whatever changes can be made need to be made.

Para 15 has a list of what constitutes social distancing in this order:

- six-foot distance requirements
- hand sanitizer/sanitizer products
- separate hours for vulnerable populations
- online/remote access

As stated in Para 13, all facilities may not be able to practice all. But each facility is to try to comply to the extent that they are able.

Para 16 gives the intent of this order. The intent is to keep as many people as possible at home or away from group settings and/or activities, all the while providing a framework wherein essential services can still be carried out.

Para 18 gives the employer checklists for facilities that remain open under this order. Employers are to implement as many of these actions as possible:

- work from home provision
- encouraging sick employees to remain home/sending sick employees home
- up-to-date sick leave policies
- separate symptomatic employees from others and send them home
- reinforce key messages about this epidemic
- frequent cleaning of commonly touched office/factory/business surfaces
- changing of business practices if needed

Para 19 affirms the authority of the local health department to continue to issue quarantine/isolation orders and to close any business that fails to comply with the provisions of this order, either by not closing a non-essential business, or by failing to implement the social distancing requirements of this order. This paragraph gives the authority to enforce the provisions of this order. *Businesses and industries* that are conducting essential work but are still not implementing the required provisions of this order *can still be closed under an order from the Health Commissioner in their jurisdiction, as per the authority of the Ohio Revised Code 3707 and 3709.*

Para 22 give the present duration of the order. As noted, the order can be modified by ODH as the situation warrants

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the ODH “Stay-at-Home” Order

Q: why are basketball courts or children’s play areas being shut down when the governor is saying that we are to be out exercising?

A: While the order does encourage outdoor activity, it is encouraging such activity in isolation or in small groups. Often basketball involves more than the mandatory limit of 10 individuals. Also, even when exercising, the 6-foot distance is to be maintained. This cannot be done in basketball game.

As to the playground, playgrounds have numerous common surfaces that can easily transmit disease. Further, most playgrounds are unattended and can easily have more than 10 individuals in the same location

Q: Why are drive throughs still permitted to be operating? You cannot maintain a 6-ft distance.

A: Drive throughs (along with other forms of food pick-up) are deemed essential by the director’s order. As such, such contact is permitted, in that it is a brief contact, usually in open air. The fact that the contact is brief and out in the open helps reduce the risk of transmission

Q: Why is my business operating? My employer does no essential work.

A: As stated by the order and reiterated by both Governor DeWine and Lt Governor Husted, companies are to provide justification as to why they are operating. The director’s order provides 25 essential categories that are permitted to operate, many of which have to do with being part of a supply chain for a needed industry (such as medical or transportation or delivery).

Q: Why are food workers not wearing masks and gloves?

A: Under this order, there is no provision for providing employees with either masks or gloves. In fact, with the present shortage of personal protective equipment in the hospital/medical field, such a use of these items in a food service could actually contribute to shortages elsewhere. Good handwashing practices are more effective in the long run for protection.

Q: Why has my employer not provided our business with hand sanitizer?

A: Under the director’s order, all places of employment are to provide hand washing materials to their employees. Hand sanitizer, although quick, is not as effective as simple hand-washing for personal protection. Also, there is presently a national shortage of hand sanitizer and it may take time for all facilities to comply with this provision

Q: Why should I stay at home? None of my friends are sick.

A: The fact that we do not see many cases in Ohio is a testament to the effectiveness of the measures that Ohio has implemented. All one has to do is look at New York City. We do have community spread (casual person-to-person spread) in Ohio. Just because a person may not know someone who is sick, that does not mean that the disease is not in the community. Tuscarawas County does have cases. We all need to do our part to continue to protect the rest of us, esp those most vulnerable.

Q: Why can’t I have some friends over to play video games or have a party? I am not hurting anyone.

A: This virus is more easily spread by prolonged personal contact. Thus, by spending long periods of time with different individuals, you may actually be contributing to the spread of the virus in our county. This is not a vacation. This is a time of personal quarantine. The longer that we can be isolated, the sooner this virus would be gone.