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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 8, 2020

WAYNE COUNTY ISSUES EMERGENCY HEALTH ORDER TO PROTECT RESIDENTS, SLOW COVID-19 SPREAD

Order codifies State Executive Orders Made Prior to MI Supreme Court Ruling Regarding Masks, Social Distancing, and Worker Screenings

DETROIT – Wayne County today issued a new Emergency Public Health Order that clarifies and amplifies the COVID-19 orders issued by the state of Michigan. The order carries forward the public health safety precautions implemented by Governor Gretchen Whitmer in response to the coronavirus pandemic, County Executive Warren C. Evans said.

A copy of the Wayne County Emergency Public Health Order is available at www.WayneCounty.com/covid19.

Executive Evans said Wayne County's order is intended to clarify the rules and regulations county residents and businesses must follow. On Friday, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled the governor did not have legal authority to issue the emergency orders in response to COVID-19 without legislative approval. That ruling created confusion on which safety precautions people and business should still follow. Under Michigan law, local health authorities can issue emergency orders in response to public health crises.

"We are keeping the COVID-19 rules and regulations in place from before the Michigan Supreme Court ruled on the governor's authority to issue them," Executive Evans said. "Wayne County's order is simple: keep wearing masks in public; no group events larger than 10 people or 20 percent attendance per 1,000 square-feet of space; and, employers must still provide health screenings for employees working in public areas or with the public. These are the rules we are accustomed to and they are the rules we are going to follow until there is clearer direction from the state."

The governor's Executive Orders are in effect now in the jurisdiction of the Wayne County Health Department and are likely to remain in effect until at least Oct. 23. Specifically, residents and businesses under the jurisdiction of the Wayne County Public Health Department must:

- Continue wearing face masks while in public spaces;
- Limit group events to 10 people or less, or in the case of arena or entertainment event with fixed seating, limit attendance to 20 percent of the venue's seating capacity to allow for social distancing;
- Continue protections for residents of long-term care facilities; and,
- Screen employees for COVID-19 symptoms.

In addition, Wayne County school districts under the jurisdiction of the Wayne County Health Department must continue following the Return to School plan outlined by the state of Michigan.

Such specific measures in this order will be enforced, and any violations are subject to citation and penalties as outlined in the Michigan Public Health Code. This order will remain in effect until it is determined by the Health Officer of the Wayne County Health Department that the threat to the public's health and lives is no longer present. This order may be revised as well as supplemented with specific procedures and orders issued by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Michigan Public Health Code.

“Wayne County residents and businesses recognize the importance these health safety measures play in reducing the spread of COVID-19, and we have seen strong compliance across our 43 communities,” Executive Evans said. “This order just makes it clear that Wayne County is going to continue with the public health safety rules everyone is accustomed to and that are showing results in slowing the spread of this disease.”

Wayne County’s Emergency Public Health Order is likely to remain in effect until Oct. 23, or until other countermanding orders are issued. The county will issue new orders as needed to address public health safety to match or expand upon anticipated new orders from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. This order excludes the city of Detroit, which is governed by its own local health department.

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