

For Immediate Release

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**Washtenaw County Health Department Issues Public Health Emergency Order
Restricting Gatherings in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti**

Outdoor social gatherings or events now limited to no more than 25 people

YPSILANTI, Mich., August 19, 2020 – Washtenaw County Health Department is issuing a public health emergency order to limit the size of social gatherings or events within the City of Ann Arbor and the City of Ypsilanti. No more than 25 people may gather at outdoor events. The local order enhances existing state orders and further restricts social gathering in areas at increased risk for COVID-19 outbreaks as the student population returns to local universities. The order takes effect on August 20, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. and will remain in effect until amended or rescinded.

“Social gatherings without preventative measures can quickly lead to increased local cases of COVID,” says Jimena Loveluck, MSW, health officer for Washtenaw County. “Additional restrictions on the size of outdoor gatherings as well as a strong recommendation to keep records of attendees will help prevent the spread of illness and allow us to respond quickly if cases are identified.”

The local order reduces the size of allowable outdoor social gatherings from 100 down to 25. Indoor gatherings remain limited to 10 or fewer people not of the same household, as per Michigan [Executive Order 2020-160](#). At any gathering or event, inside or out, individuals not living in the same household should keep at least 6 feet of distance from one another.

Face coverings continue to be required in indoor settings and any crowded outdoor settings under [Executive Order 2020-153](#). Both the [University of Michigan](#) and [Eastern Michigan University](#) are requiring face coverings at all times on their campuses.

Washtenaw County has reported a total of [2,371 confirmed cases](#) of COVID-19 to date. In the past month, COVID-19 cases in those 30 years of age and younger represented 51% of reported cases in Washtenaw County. Cases among those of college-age have increased locally and nationally over the summer. With thousands of students returning or relocating to area universities and living in congregate housing, the Washtenaw County Health Officer finds it reasonable and necessary to further limit the size of outdoor social gatherings and organized events and reinforce COVID-19 protective measures in coordination with local municipalities and universities.

"I support the Washtenaw County Health Officer's social gathering limitation 100% and thank her for her leadership," says Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor. "Permanent residents, students, and everyone in between needs to know that they are the key to slowing the spread of COVID-19. If we all follow public health guidance and wear masks inside and outside, maintain distance, and practice good hand hygiene, we can keep ourselves, first responders, and our neighbors as safe as possible. It's up to each of us to do our part."

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Lois Allen-Richardson, Mayor of Ypsilanti agrees: “Times are not normal, and we must continue to operate as safely as possible. That means interacting differently and with more precautions in place throughout our community and our campuses.”

State law provides local health officers with the authority to issue orders to protect the public health under Section 2453 of the Public Health Code (MCL 333.2453). Those who disregard the order could be subject to a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than six months and/or a fine of up to \$200.

To reduce the spread of illness in our community, the Health Department recommends wearing a face covering, maintaining 6 feet distance from others not in your household and cleaning hands frequently. Testing is recommended for anyone reporting to work in person, with known exposure or with any mild or unusual symptoms. Symptoms may take up to 14 days after exposure to appear, and individuals are considered contagious two days before symptoms appear.

The number of local cases, guidance for employers, prevention information, testing options and more are available at www.washtenaw.org/covid19. Health Department staff are also available to answer questions. Leave a message at 734-544-6700 or email l-wchdcontact@washtenaw.org.

Resources from Washtenaw County Health Department

- [Order: Limiting Outdoor Gatherings in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti August 2020](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\): Washtenaw County Order Limiting Outdoor Social Gatherings](#)
- [Contact Tracing can Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- For testing, see www.washtenaw.org/covid19test
- [Prevention and Risk Reduction](#)
- [Guidance for Businesses](#)
- [Materials in English and other languages](#)

Information from the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University

- University of Michigan <https://campusblueprint.umich.edu/>
- [Eastern Michigan University Safe Return-to-Campus Plan](#)

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board and maintains state accreditation through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

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