

For Immediate Release

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Washtenaw County Health Department Issues Public Health Emergency Stay in Place Order for University of Michigan Students

All social activities must be limited and existing public health guidance observed

YPSILANTI, Mich., Oct 20, 2020 – Washtenaw County Health Department is issuing a public health emergency stay in place order for University of Michigan undergraduate students effective immediately and continuing through November 3, 2020 at 7:00 a.m. The number of COVID-19 cases among U-M students is increasing and represents over 60% of local cases. Stay in place orders are intended to limit socializing among students, slow down new cases, and allow for effective case investigation and contact tracing. Most infections are the result of social events and gatherings.

“The situation locally has become critical, and this order is necessary to reverse the current increase in cases,” says Jimena Loveluck, MSW, health officer for Washtenaw County. “We must continue to do what we can to minimize the impact on the broader community and to ensure we have the public health capacity to fully investigate cases and prevent additional spread of illness.”

Under the newly issued stay in place order, undergraduate students must remain in their residence, unless attending class, accessing dining services, or carrying out approved work that cannot be done remotely. Students who wish to return to a primary residence may do so only if they have completed the U-M’s procedures for leaving campus safely.

Under existing state orders, everyone must continue to separate themselves from others not already in their household by at least 6 feet and wear a face covering when out in public or in common areas.

A stay in place order is not the same as quarantine. During the stay in place order, official and essential activities are allowable when carried out using COVID-19 prevention measures including wearing face coverings, social distancing and frequent hand cleaning. While this order allows students to work and participate in official activities with preventive measures in place, it also limits the impact of exposures on local businesses, workers and community members.

In support of the county order, the university also will take the additional steps out of an abundance of caution and to provide choices for students and instructors, including moving more undergraduate courses to fully remote instruction for the remainder of the fall semester.

“The university has been working closely with the Health Department all along in response to the pandemic and supports this decision to issue this stay at home order,” says Robert Ernst, executive director of U-M’s University Health Service and associate vice president for Student Life. “This action is intended to reduce the strain on our capacities for contact tracing and quarantine and isolation

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housing. Many individuals and off-campus residences are cooperating fully, and we hope this additional guidance on limiting social activities reverses the trend of increased cases related to social gatherings.”

Violations of the local order are subject to the citations and penalties outlined in the Michigan Public Health Code (MCL 333.2451 and 333.2453).

Washtenaw County has reported a total of 4,229 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of Oct 19. More than 600 confirmed and probable cases have been reported in Washtenaw County in the past week (since Oct 12), and 61% of these are connected to University of Michigan students living on or off campus, many in congregate or group settings. As such, the Washtenaw County Health Officer finds it reasonable and necessary to mandate stay in place orders and reinforce existing COVID-19 protective measures in coordination with the university.

All U-M students who have been identified as testing positive or as a close contact as determined through case investigation are offered the opportunity to move into U-M quarantine and isolation housing and utilize other U-M resources.

The Health Department reminds everyone that COVID-19 continues to circulate in our community and cases are also increasing in non-campus areas. These trends are consistent with trends in other areas of Michigan as well as other states. Risk is present any time individuals are out in public or interacting with others. To reduce the spread of illness, the Health Department recommends wearing a face covering, maintaining 6 feet distance from others not in your household, cleaning hands frequently, and avoiding others if you have any symptoms.

These prevention strategies are most effective when combined. Using them remains vital to slowing the spread of illness and preventing as many cases of COVID-19 as possible – especially as the weather becomes colder, more activities are indoors, and [flu](#) may begin to circulate locally.

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. If you are exposed and asymptomatic, please wait 7 to 10 days before testing. A negative test does NOT eliminate the need to quarantine for a full 14 days after exposure.

U-M students are encouraged to seek COVID-19 testing at the on-campus University Health Service (uhs.umich.edu).

Local COVID-19 information is available at www.washtenaw.org/covid19. Health Department staff are available to answer questions. Call 734-544-6700 or email L-wchdcontact@washtenaw.org.

Resources from Washtenaw County Health Department

- [Full Stay in Place Order](#) Issued Oct 20, 2020 (updated 10/23/20)
- [FAQ \(Frequently Asked Questions\)](#) on the Washtenaw Stay in Place Order (Oct 20) (updated 10/23/20)
- [Attachment 1 – Health Department Compliance Criteria](#)
- [COVID-19 Health Orders](#)
- For testing, see www.washtenaw.org/covid19test
- [Prevention and Risk Reduction](#)

Information from the University of Michigan

- University of Michigan <https://campusblueprint.umich.edu/>

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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