

**ORDER OF THE STATE HEALTH OFFICER  
SUSPENDING CERTAIN PUBLIC GATHERINGS  
DUE TO RISK OF INFECTION BY COVID-19**

**(APPLICABLE STATEWIDE)**

**AMENDED MARCH 20, 2020**

**WHEREAS**, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been detected in Alabama; and

**WHEREAS**, the appearance of COVID-19 in the State poses the potential of widespread exposure to an infectious agent that poses significant risk of substantial harm to a large number of people; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Board of Health has designated COVID-19 to be a disease of epidemic potential, a threat to the health and welfare of the public, or otherwise of public health importance; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2020, on recommendation of the State Health Officer, Kay Ivey, Governor of the State of Alabama, declared a state public health emergency exists in the State of Alabama; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 16, 2020, the Jefferson County Health Officer, in response to a rapidly growing number of cases of COVID-19 being detected in Jefferson County, issued an order suspending certain public gatherings in that county; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 17, 2020, the State Health Officer issued a similar order for counties surrounding Jefferson, including Blount, St. Clair, Shelby, Tuscaloosa, and Walker Counties, and

**WHEREAS**, further social distancing measures are necessary to be implemented on a statewide basis to prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, Ala. Code § 22-2-2(4), authorizes the State Health Officer, on behalf of the State Board of Health, to direct that conditions prejudicial to health in public places within the State be abated;

**NOW THEREFORE, THESE PREMISES CONSIDERED**, it is ordered that the following be implemented statewide:

1. Effective today, all non-work related gatherings of 25 persons or more, or non-work related gatherings of any size that cannot maintain a consistent six-foot distance between persons, are prohibited. Employers shall take all reasonable steps to meet these standards for employees and customers.

2. Effective March 19, 2020, at 5:00 P.M., all beaches shall be closed. For purposes of this section, the term "beach" means the sandy shoreline area abutting the Gulf of Mexico, whether privately or publicly owned, including beach access points.

3. Effective Friday, March 20, 2020, all regular programs at Senior Citizen Centers shall be ended except that Senior Citizen Centers and their partners are urged to assure that their clients continue to receive needed meals via curbside pick-up or delivery.

4. Effective today, the following shall be closed:

a. In-person instruction or classes at all schools, public and private, including but not limited to: elementary, secondary, postsecondary, technical, or specialty schools, and colleges and universities.

(1) This order is not intended to prevent any employers from making continued necessary staffing decisions. Employers are authorized to advise employees to work from home or maintain flexible work schedules. If working from home is not feasible, the employee should practice social distancing, maintaining consistent six-foot distance between persons, for the duration of this order and follow public health guidelines.

(2) This order shall not apply to daytime special activities programs provided by local boards of education for children, ages 6 through 12 as of March 13, 2020, of First Responders (including EMS and Fire Services) and Licensed Healthcare Providers, and their essential employees, and essential employees of the following categories of employers: State and Local Governments, Law Enforcement, Hospitals, Nursing Home/Long Term Care Facilities (including Assisted Living and Specialty Care Assisted Living Facilities), End Stage Renal Disease Treatment Centers, Pharmacies, and Grocery Stores. In these special activities programs, 12 or more children shall not be allowed in any one room at the same time, and operators of these programs are encouraged to use enhanced sanitation practices consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Alabama Department of Public Health.

b. Facilities providing child day care, including any child day care facility described in Ala. Code § 38-7-2, at which 12 or more children are in a room or other enclosed or separated space at the same time. Center employees are encouraged to use enhanced sanitation and social-distancing practices consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Alabama Department of Public Health. This Order does not change the Minimum Standards for Day Care promulgated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources, except that 12 or more children shall not be allowed in a room or other enclosed or separated space at the same time.

5. Effective immediately, all Hospitals and Nursing Home/Long Term Care Facilities (including Assisted Living and Specialty Care Assisted Living Facilities) shall prohibit visitation of all visitors, as defined by the facility, and non-essential health care personnel, except for certain compassionate care situations such as maternity and end-of-life.

6. Effective immediately, all elective dental and medical procedures shall be delayed.

7. Effective March 19, 2020, at 5:00 P.M., all restaurants, bars, breweries, or similar establishments shall not permit on-premises consumption of food or drink.

a. Such establishments may continue to offer food for take-out or delivery provided the social distancing protocols, including maintaining a consistent six-foot distance between persons, are followed.

b. Such establishments are strongly encouraged to offer online ordering and curbside pick-up of food.

c. Hospital food service areas are excluded from this order provided they have their own social distancing plan.

8. If organizers or sponsors of otherwise suspended events desire, they may submit a request for an exemption from this order, at the discretion of the State Health Officer. While the State Health Officer is under no obligation to grant such an exemption, it shall be fairly considered based on the following criteria:

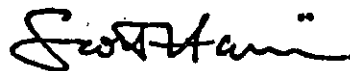
a. Effective measures have been taken to identify those attending the event who may potentially be affected with COVID-19, including but not limited to personal testing for the disease or submission of current medical clearances to the organizer.

b. Effective measures have been taken to prevent the spread of infection even by those that are infected while not symptomatic, including the provision of anti-infection measures such as proper face masks, personal sanitation measures, and other measures that may be considered proper.

9. Prior to April 6, 2020, a determination shall be made whether to extend this Order.

Upon the effective dates and times set forth above, this Order supersedes all orders previously issued by the State Health Officer and Jefferson and Mobile County Health Officers, and shall remain in full force and effect until rescinded by order of the State Health Officer. The Jefferson and Mobile County Health Officers are authorized, after approval by the State Health Officer, to implement more stringent measures as local circumstances require.

Done on this 20<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.



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Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.  
State Health Officer