



COVID-19 in Ohio: A government relations update

March 17, 2020

As of March 16, 2020, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ohio reached 50 with 14 hospitalizations. The DeWine Administration provides daily updates and has also created a portal for all COVID-19 related updates, orders, resources and information. Over the past several days, Governor DeWine took several executive actions to combat the spread of COVID-19 in Ohio.

- **March 2020 Primary Election.** Governor DeWine announced that the Primary Election will be postponed to June 2, 2020. However, Governor DeWine does not legally have the authority to postpone the election. Therefore, an emergency lawsuit will be filed seeking postponement. UPDATE: A Franklin County Common Pleas Judge rejected the request and Ohio's Primary Election is slated to go on as scheduled. We will continue monitoring this fluid situation.
- **Mass Gathering Ban.** Mass gatherings of more than 50 people are banned in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's new guidance.¹
- **Public & Private K-12 Schools – Closed.** All K-12 schools will close after the school day on Monday, March 16. K-12 schools will remain closed until at least April 3, 2020, but could be closed for significantly longer, according to Governor DeWine.
- **Restaurant & Bar Closure.** All restaurants and bars were ordered to close by Sunday night, March 15. Carry out and delivery services may still be provided to the public.
- **Additional Private Business Closings.** Governor DeWine is also ordering fitness centers, gyms, bowling alleys, movie theaters, indoor waterparks, indoor trampoline parks and community centers to close by the end of business on March 16, 2020.
- **State Government Operations/Remote Staffing.** Non-essential state government employees will be working remotely

until further notice.

- State Government/Relaxed Regulatory Measures. Lt. Governor Husted announced that regulatory requirements, such as inspections and timely filings, may be relaxed while addressing COVID-19. Also, a letter was sent to President Trump asking for similar latitude on federally-required inspections.
- Ohio Unemployment Compensation. The normal one-week waiting period to apply for unemployment compensation is suspended. Individuals who are not offered paid leave through their job, are quarantined by a medical professional, or whose employers must temporarily close may apply for benefits.
- Ohio Small Business Assistance. The Ohio Development Services Agency will submit an application in the coming week to qualify Ohio for the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program. This program will provide businesses and nonprofits with low interest rate loans.
- Nursing Homes – Visitor Ban. Visitors to nursing homes and assisted living facilities are not permitted, nor are visitors allowed inside state psychiatric hospitals.
- Ohio General Assembly – Postponed Legislative Activities. The Ohio Senate and Ohio House have directed staff to work from home. The Ohio House has suspended all legislative activity until further notice. The Ohio Senate plans to still hold their scheduled voting sessions.

¹ The CDC and White House issued additional guidance simultaneously to Gov. DeWine's press conference saying that groupings should be less than 10. We'll monitor to see if Ohio follows the revised guidance.

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